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THE

CLASSIC PREACHERS

OF THE

ENGLISH CHURCH.

LECTURES DELIVERED AT ST. JAMES'S CHURCH IN 1877.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

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CONTENTS.

PAGE

INTRODUCTION v

DONNE (THE POET-PREACHER) 1
J. B. LIGHTFOOT, D.D., Canon of St. Paul's, and Margaret Professor of Divinity, Cambridge.

BARROW (THE EXHAUSTIVE PREACHER) 27
H. WACE, M.A., Chaplain of Lincoln's Inn, and Professor of Ecclesiastical History, King's Coll., London.

SOUTH (THE RHETORICIAN) 53
W. C. LAKE, D.D., Dean of Durham.

BEVERIDGE (THE SCRIPTURAL PREACHER) 81
W. R. CLARK, M.A., Prebendary of Wells, and Vicar of Taunton.

WILSON (THE SAINTLY PREACHER) 109
F. W. FARRAR, D.D., Canon of Westminster.

BUTLER (THE ETHICAL PREACHER) 135
E. M. GOULBURN, D.D., Dean of Norwich.

INTRODUCTION.

SPEAKING of places of Christian worship, Hooker says "Our repair thither is especially for mutual conference and, as it were, commerce to be had between God and us;"* and whatever tends to defeat this end, or, indeed, does not forward it, can hardly fail to be prejudicial to the spiritual life of the Church.

A distinguished physicist has been heard to describe, almost in the same breath with the avowal of his inability to join in any religious service, as such, the great enjoyment which he derived from listening to anthems, chanting and hymns. In the province of devotion this was an example of what we may conceive to take place in that of religious teaching and exhortation. The attraction of able and interesting literary exercitations may not only gather to the pulpit an auditory which neither seeks nor is likely to derive any spiritual benefit from such hearing, but may seriously mislead many persons

* 'Eccl. Pol.' V. xviii. 1.

who are not insensible of their need of that help which preaching is divinely appointed to afford. If they have but listened to the preacher with a moderate degree of attention, and still more if they have had any kind of unobjectionable pleasure in hearing him, they may go away persuaded that they have realised all the benefit of the ordinance, and fulfilled all their duty towards it; and yet its effect upon them may not have been at all more spiritual or religious than was that of sacred harmonies in the instance which has just been mentioned.* The notion that a religious duty is done when its forms have been perfunctorily observed, and well done when this has been accomplished pleasantly or easily, is but a variety of the theory of the *opus operatum*, and a very dangerous one too, because it is not so obviously and repulsively superstitious as are some of those which an enlightened Christianity will unhesitatingly reprobate.†

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* "It is certain that a sermon, the conclusion whereof makes the auditory look pleased, and sets them all a-talking one with another, was either not right spoken or not right heard."—Burnet's 'Pastoral Care,' c. ix.

† In this connection I may be allowed to quote the following:—"Many persons were found at Church for the great Christian ceremonies, and at the theatres or even at the temples, for the heathen spectacles. The ritual of the Church was viewed as a theatrical exhibition. The sermons were listened to as the displays of rhetoricians; and eloquent preachers were cheered with clapping of hands, stamping of feet, waving of handkerchiefs, cries of 'Orthodox'! 'Thirteenth Apostle'! and other like demonstrations, which such teachers as Chrysostom and Augustine often tried to restrain, in order that

At the same time it is easy to justify, though not without some reservation, the policy of making the service of the sanctuary attractive to the cultivated intellect as well as to a refined taste. The kind of considerations which may be allowed to prevail in recommendation of an element which is ceremonious, spectacular and sensuous in worship, may be extended with much less hesitation to efforts by which the intelligence of the community is sought to be conciliated towards the ministrations of the pulpit. It is surely a gain if minds which cannot otherwise be reached and feelings which cannot otherwise be moved by holy influences are, in any way which is not in itself

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they might persuade their flocks to a more profitable manner of hearing. Some went to church for the sermon only, alleging that they could pray at home. And when the more attractive parts of the service were over, the great mass of the people departed, without remaining for the administration of the Eucharist. . . . Things which would have been good either as expressions of devotion or as means of training for it, became through their multiplication, and through the importance which was attached to them, too likely to be regarded as independent ends."—Robertson, 'History of the Christian Church,' Book II., c. vi., p. 356. Truly history, ecclesiastical as well as civil, repeats itself. Let any one go to St. Paul's Cathedral, at an ordinary Sunday morning service, if he would see, that not only, as is the case in nearly every church, "without remaining for the administration of the Eucharist," but without even remaining to take away the text of the sermon, a great part of the congregation will still depart when the more attractive, *i.e.* the musical, portion of the service is over. It is impossible, however, to be too thankful for the improvement which has taken place of late years in the reverent and devotional tone and aspect as well as in the general "rendering" of the St. Paul's services.

prejudicial or unlawful, brought into a contact with sacred things from which spiritual profit may, at any rate, be fairly hoped for. Let us take the case of the Bible itself. If that Holy Volume had contained nothing but what the dullest might understand, the most unlettered interpret, and the most disputatious agree about, a large number of those who now study it diligently, and not without advantage to their souls, would, for want of intellectual stimulus, read it, if at all, with most unprofitable distaste and weariness. Given, as it is, in a form which affords occasions so numerous and of such great variety for mental activity and power to be applied to it, many are drawn and fixed to its pages by the pleasant sense of a healthful and (so to say) manly intellectual exercise, and are thus familiarised with objects, modes of thought, and principles of conduct which are calculated to direct and colour those higher faculties whereby the soul of man can hold converse with Heaven. And that which is true of the Word written, is also true of the Word preached. The first point is to get an attentive and respectful hearing for it. This secured, it becomes comparatively easy to turn that hearing to its proper account.

But as, in the case of worship, the ceremonial will be anything but justifiable if it interposes a concealing or obscuring medium between the worshipper and the object of his worship, so, in that of preaching,

it is not enough that its auditory is collected in a consecrated building, and that its utterances proceed from a gowned or surpliced orator, mounted in a pulpit. Call it by what name we will—a discourse, a lecture, an address, a homily, or what not—the ideal which is implied in the designation *sermon*, should never be lost sight of, always be distinctly aimed at. "So worthy a part of divine service," says Hooker, "we should greatly wrong if we did not esteem Preaching as the blessed ordinance of God, sermons as keys to the kingdom of heaven, as wings to the soul, as spurs to the good affections of man, unto the sound and healthy as food, as physic unto diseased minds;"* and directly or indirectly—more (as I venture to think) directly than indirectly—these purposes ought to be subserved whenever a Christian congregation is addressed from a Christian pulpit by a Christian minister.

No opinion is here intended as to what is called the greater utilisation of our Churches and Cathedrals by allowing semi-secular Lectures or Addresses to be delivered in them. This may or may not be defensible and expedient. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge is not denied to be within its functions in issuing books, provided they are written in a religious spirit, that fall under the designation of "General Literature," and so

* 'Eccl. Pol.' V. xxii. 1.

possibly it may be held that, at least upon week-days, and with adequate safeguards (if such could be devised), we should do well to open our Churches for purposes auxiliary to religious ends, though not directly and distinctively directed to them. This is a question which it would be out of place to discuss here. The discourses in this volume were delivered at a regular Sunday service, and what was sought was to reconcile their introduction there with those views of the proper use of the pulpit at such times, which have ever prevailed, and I devoutly trust ever will prevail, in our own and nearly every other Christian communion. The aim was that in their effect upon the congregation they should be *sermons*, in accordance with the description quoted above from Hooker, and be distinctly understood and felt to be such. It was earnestly desired that they should not cause the Church in which they were delivered to be regarded as a kind of ecclesiastical Lecture Hall—a Royal Institution for Sundays—as in former times certain London chapels were said to relieve the tedium of the day by furnishing persons who could not make up their minds to 'miss Church' altogether, with the opportunity of whiling away a weary hour at a Sunday opera.

This object, as I thought, would not be attained, nor the danger avoided, if certain great English divines were treated generally, so that the discourses devoted to them should form so many portraits in

the gallery of the National Church, so many chapters in its history, or so many articles in its biographical dictionary. The proposal of a Series of Lectures, to be delivered in the Chapel of King's College, upon "The Masters in English Theology,"* was almost simultaneous with that of the discourses in this volume; and when my friend Canon Barry mentioned it to me, with the expression of a hope that I might not think it would clash with mine, I at once welcomed it with cordial approval. The pulpit of an educational institution, of which the theological department forms the most prominent and the most important feature—of which, indeed, it may be said that the theological is the distinctive character†—is undoubtedly most legitimately employed in such teaching as those Lectures are intended to communicate; especially as there is no pastoral charge connected with the chapel, and it cannot be considered—its size alone would prevent that—to supply to the students in general the place of a parish Church. But the very title of those Lectures at once points to an auditory of a different

* Now published by Mr. Murray.

† This is said with the utmost respect for the great medical school connected with the College. The fact that the Principal of the Institution is required to be a Divine, who is also its head theological Teacher, is of itself sufficient to mark the pre-eminence of its theological over its medical character. The question of the comparative efficiency, popularity or extent of any particular department of the College is not meant to be in any way raised, or even hinted at or implied.

kind from that which was either wished or likely to be gathered in St. James's Church at the delivery of this present series. That title has, at least, an "*ad clerum*" look or sound, whereas, in my scheme, although a higher than the average intelligence of a parochial congregation was certainly aimed at, it was the "*ad populum*" character that I was supremely anxious should prevail, as being more consistent, if I should not say alone consistent, with the time, the place, and the circumstances of its designation.

And it was for this reason that none of the great Anglican divines but such as were known and distinguished as *preachers* were included in the series, and that those who were included were required to be treated with especial reference to their sermons. This treatment was intended to be completely secured by annexing to each of their names a designation descriptive of the peculiar characteristic of the preaching of each. The attempt was one of some little difficulty, and it is doubtful whether it can be successfully extended to as many more of our great preachers without repetition. So far as they have gone, however, the designations seem to be neither fanciful nor, in any instance, other than accurate.

How the great ends of Christian preaching were considered to be promoted by such treatment of such subjects must now be explained.

Our Blessed Lord bids His disciples be careful

what and how they hear.* It would be straining these cautions from their true meaning and purpose to apply them directly to the due estimate of what Christian preaching should be; but they may fairly suggest the consideration whether it is not of the utmost importance that our congregations should be disabused of mistaken and false notions upon that subject, and indoctrinated with sound ones. We cannot suppose, without attributing to the pulpit a superiority to human infirmity far greater than it can lay claim to, that the taste and demand of the people will not always greatly influence, if not the substance of its teaching, at any rate the form, manner and method of it—if not the *τί ἀκούεται*, at any rate the *πῶς*. No doubt it will be the pulpit itself that will, in the first instance, create the popular taste and give direction to the popular demand. An individual or a small set, the nucleus, perhaps, of what grows into a party, will strike out some kind of novelty, more or less marked, and either for the better or for the worse. If it 'takes,' the example will be followed, until nearly every pulpit in the communion will be more or less affected by the influence. Any one who has carefully observed the preaching of the English Church during no longer a period than the last half century, must see that the changes it has gone through

* *βλέπετε τί ἀκούετε.* St. Mark iv. 24. | *βλέπετε πῶς ἀκούετε.* St. Luke viii. 18.

have been scarcely less evident than those of 'the fashions' themselves. The social habits and the costume of the present decade are not more varied from those of 1830 or 1850 than is the kind of preaching which now commands the most general approval from that which drew crowds from the West End to Bishopsgate, when Bishop Blomfield was Rector; or made St. Mary's at Oxford such a centre of power,* when John Henry Newman delivered his Parochial Sermons there. The comparative desertion which is occasionally witnessed of good preachers who were once attractive, and who continue to preach as well as ever they did, though partly attributable to the popular craving for novelty, is not always wholly due to that cause. When it is said of such an one that "his day is gone by," it often means, not that everybody has heard all he has to say, and that to continue "sitting under" him is to be served only with *crambe repetita;* but that his style or method is no longer in vogue. He does not hit the taste and fall in with the tone of the times. In short, he is out of fashion.† To say, therefore, that preaching will be greatly influenced in respect to its style, and somewhat even in respect to its matter, by the consideration of popular taste and demand, is not

* See Prof. Shairp's 'Studies in Poetry and Philosophy,' p. 275.

† A similar phenomenon is observed by Burnet in regard to the preaching of the period from the Reformation to his own time. 'Pastoral Care,' c. ix.

necessarily to attribute to preachers any feeling that is blameworthy. St. Paul asks, "How shall they hear without a preacher?"* and the converse question may also be put, "How shall one preach without hearers?" It is hardly enough for him to be satisfied that he is delivering, Sunday after Sunday, sermons that will stand every test, literary, orthodoxal, and even spiritual, if Sunday after Sunday his auditory dwindles away, and what remains of it grows more and more listless and drowsy, turns more and more glances at the gallery clock, or more and more openly and discourteously draws out and consults the tardy-moving watch. In fact, the preacher will and must accommodate himself to some extent to the *liking* of his hearers, and therefore it is a matter of importance, as affecting the quality of his sermons, that his hearers should bring to the hearing a just estimate of what sermons ought to be, and the faculty of distinguishing what is good and wholesome in them from what is unprofitable, not to say deleterious, even though it may be agreeable.

As a help towards forming such tastes and cultivating such faculties, a better acquaintance with "the Classic Preachers of the English Church" seemed likely to be of service. The idea was not at all that those preachers should be held up as models for imitation in the present day, but simply that the

* Romans x. 14.

study of them should be recommended and their excellences understood and appreciated. To produce in the pulpit of the nineteenth century sermons which Andrewes or Donne, Sanderson or Butler, South or Barrow, might themselves be supposed to have written, or rather which might pass for theirs with persons who have some little acquaintance with their writings, would be a feat of considerable literary cleverness, but worse than useless for any purpose of nineteenth-century preaching. Classic models are studied, not for the purpose of enabling the artist or the writer to produce works which shall resemble, or even be of the same character with, those models, but in order to imbue him with feelings, furnish him with principles, and elicit, animate, and strengthen for him perceptions which he may apply to the embodiment of his own original ideas. By this means he is trained to observe in the best way, that is, unconsciously, those laws of art, every violation of which detracts from the value of his work, and all conformity to which is an enhancement of its excellence. When Burnet recommends the clergy to fit themselves for their pulpit ministrations by "reading Quintilian, and Tully's book of Oratory, and by observing the spirit and method of Tully's Orations: or if they can enter into Demosthenes," to use him "as a much better pattern,"* no one supposes that he

* 'Pastoral Care,' c. ix.

would have them attempt in their sermons a kind of Christianised classicality of structure and language. Similarly it must not be imagined that in seeking to extend a knowledge of our greatest preachers, and to awaken an interest in them, with a view to the more complete efficiency of the pulpit of our own day, any such foolish and futile notion was entertained as that those preachers might be what we should call *copied* with advantage. I should question the desirableness of even modernising and adapting them for present use; not so much, however, for the reason against using other men's sermons, which Burnet gives, viz. lest it should "too evidently appear that he" who does this "cannot be the author of his own sermons," which would "make both him and them lose much of their weight,"* as because every age and almost every generation has its own peculiar modes of thought as much as, or even more than, of expression. Though the Gospel itself can never be "another,"† it admits of endless variety in the manner in which it is presented and commended to acceptance, a variety which may be legitimately turned to account, and ought to be turned to account, by accommodating its preaching, of course within proper limits, to the peculiar wants, tempers, tastes, and other circumstances of each particular period, as well as each particular country, church and congregation.

* 'Pastoral Care,' c. ix.

† Galat. i. 7.

And as it was never contemplated that the preachers treated of in this series should be held up as patterns for direct imitation, so neither was it that their faults and defects should be overlooked or extenuated. On the contrary, it was quite expected that nearly all of them would afford occasions for pointing out blots, blemishes, and imperfections, which might be scarcely less useful as warnings than their excellences and beauties might be as guides. The series is not meant as a contribution to English hagiology; and if it were, the *Advocatus Diaboli* would have a perfect right to insist that virtues should not be attempted to be magnified by the suppression of truth with regard to anything that deserved censure or that ought to qualify praise. The Saints of the Universal Church are men about whose errors, indeed whose sins, their inspired histories make no secret; and it certainly was neither necessary nor advisable to proceed upon a different principle in depicting these lesser lights, particularly when the purpose for which they were to be depicted is borne in mind. To indicate, and even somewhat to exaggerate, what is faulty in their preaching, could scarcely weaken—it might even strengthen—the effect of a fair statement of their title to the rank they hold. That they should have achieved, in spite of such drawbacks, the eminence accorded to them by universal consent, might reasonably be argued to be evidence of an extraordinary balance of

the highest merit, and might well challenge all the attention and study which their greatest admirers could desire to see devoted to them. The saintliness of Wilson infusing itself into his homely commonplace, and lending a holy charm even to his poverty of thought; the tenderness, the fervour and the poetry of Donne reconciling us to his fancies, extravagances and affectations; the deep thought and adamantine reasoning of Butler compelling us to find ample excuse for his severe and unevangelical dryness; Barrow by his conscientious thoroughness, his robust strength, and his solid weight, overcoming our impatience of lengthiness and elaborate detail; Beveridge by his "simplicity and godly sincerity," his intimacy with the Word of God and his admirable use of it, his Apostolical Churchmanship and his deep piety, winning us to find in his prosaic plainness, his diffuseness and his prolixity, little or no hindrance to our assent to his warmest eulogists; and South, by his masterful command of well-nigh every art and resource of the consummate orator, his energy, his boldness, his wit, his lucidity and brilliancy of language, overcoming the repugnance which his fierce combativeness and deficient spirituality might well excite—these all are examples of transcendent excellence, establishing its claims by the help of the very things which might well prove incompatible with aught that could be acknowledged as great excellence at all.

It must not be supposed that the attempt to encourage the study of sermons which have taken their place as classical in the literature of the Church, is in any way influenced by a wish, either that a more artificial and (as it were) literary style of preaching should prevail, or that extempore preaching should be discouraged. With regard to the latter, it may be worth consideration whether there is not some reason to apprehend that it threatens to become too common; but its practice is not only not incompatible with diligent study of homiletic literature, but requires it even more than 'preaching from book.' Coleridge would seem to have been singularly unfortunate in his experience of extempore preachers, for, so far, at least, as the Church of England is concerned, the case was hardly so bad about forty years ago as he describes it to have been.* It is certainly a good deal better now. At the same time, his description must be acknowledged to represent very truly the state of things which extempore

* "No doubt preaching, in the proper sense of the word, is more effective than reading: and therefore I would not prohibit it, but leave a liberty to the clergyman who feels himself able to accomplish it. But as things now are, I am quite sure I prefer going to church to a pastor who reads his discourse: for I never yet heard more than one preacher without book, who did not forget his argument in three minutes' time, and fall into vague and unprofitable declamation, and generally very coarse declamation too. These preachers never progress; they eddy round and round. Sterility of mind follows their ministry."—'Table Talk,' vol. ii. p. 103.

preaching has a tendency to produce; and hence the greater the disposition to adopt that method, and the greater the probability of its adoption becoming general, the greater will be the need of such studies as may control and regulate it, so that it may be for edification and not for destruction.*

These are days of a teeming press, of cheap books, of education becoming almost universal and consequently of oral instruction becoming less and less generally necessary. Nevertheless, that kind of instruction will always have a place in every department of knowledge, and in that of sacred knowledge it can never lose the rank assigned to it in the form of preaching by the Divine appointment. It may, indeed, fail to have its position duly recognised, its proper function rightly understood, and adequate use made of it as a means of grace. As in an early age, so now, it may be driven or lowered from its proper estate by an undue exaltation of ritual† on the one hand, or on the other by the spread of a critical and contemptuous intellectualism. But appreciated or not, well and sufficiently used or not, it will always be an office committed to the Church, and a power intrusted to her, which lay her under a vast and most solemn responsibility as to the account which she is able to give of it. "It was the pulpit beyond anything else that carried the

* 2 Cor. x. 8.

† See Robertson's 'History of the Christian Church,' Book vi., c. i. § ix.

Reformation through" . . . and thus "achieved a more extensive and a more lasting conquest than all the armies of England ever did. The effect of a victory by the vulgar force of war passes and is forgotten, whereas that of the pulpit at the Reformation endures to this day—will endure throughout all time and in all eternity. Such capacity for good has the pulpit. Again, it was the pulpit that awoke the nation to the civil wars in the reign of Charles beyond every other instrument. . . . The main alarum—the primary spring—of all the movements of the powerful party that eventually subverted both throne and altar, was the London pulpit—the London pulpit which received the watchword from the stirring spirits of the rising government and communicated the shock to all the pulpits within the four seas. Such power had the pulpit for evil—the latter instance answering my purpose as well as the former; for it seems to demonstrate the energy there is in the pulpit, at least, however applied; and the consequent obligation there is upon us, who have it in our own hands to make the most of such an engine, and not allow it to go to sleep"*—to which I will add, or deteriorate or fail to keep pace with an advancing intelligence.

A few words must be added to justify the consistency with the main design of these Lectures of

* Prof. J. J. Blunt, 'Duties of the Parish Priest,' Lect. V. p. 142.

those biographical and personal sketches and references which are contained in all of them. These were indispensable not only to the completeness and truth of the delineations, but also to the production of their intended effects. There is no branch of oratory, scarcely any of literary composition, into which *the individual man* ought to enter so much as into preaching. The advocate may and often must identify himself so completely with his cause or his client as to make him put his own personality aside altogether, and even seem to believe and feel otherwise than he really does. The senator deals with a class of questions which are generally out of the sphere of his inner life—that life which constitutes the true self. But this is the sphere into which it is the first object of the true preacher to make his way, and within which his preaching, to be really effective, must live and move and have its being. Unreal words—that is to say, words which represent motives, beliefs, affections and thoughts which are not truly those of him who utters them—can never hold their ground and exercise any strong and enduring influence in that sphere. It is only the true self of one man that can ever bring itself into that close contact and communion with the true self of another, by which it becomes to that other as the channel or instrument of God's renovating grace. This consideration, as it will explain much of the power, will also account for

much of the weakness of the preachers here recommended for study, and of a multitude of others who have exercised and do exercise the like office with theirs. Above all, it will serve as an admonition to us who have been called to that office, that we make it our supreme endeavour and most earnest prayer that we may ourselves be what we tell others that God, theirs and ours, would have us be.

J. E. K.

St. James's Rectory, 7th Sept. 1877.

*** It is hoped that this series may be followed next year by a second, comprising most of the following: Andrewes, Taylor, Sanderson, Hall, Horsley, Tillotson, Secker, Bull, Sharp, Horne, Paley and Leighton, if the last can be properly included amongst Preachers of the English Church.

DONNE,

THE POET-PREACHER.

"Tell me which of them will love him most."—*St. Luke* vii. 42.
"There are last which shall be first."—*St. Luke* xiii. 30.

Donne's monument in St. Paul's—Its character and history an emblem of the man—His early life—His friendships—Donne as a poet—The double dislocation in his life—His conversion from Romanism—His earlier immorality and later penitence—Comparison with St. Augustine—Effects on his preaching—The secret of his power as a preacher—His reluctance to enter Holy Orders and ultimate ordination—His energy and reputation as a preacher—His extant sermons—Dean Milman's opinion—Animation of his preaching—Examples of his style—Appearance and manner of the preacher—Walton's description of him—His faults—Affectation overcome by the theme—His practical sense—His pointed sayings—His irony—The last sermon—His death—Lesson of his life and teaching.

AGAINST the wall of the south choir aisle in the Cathedral of St. Paul is a monument which very few of the thousands who visit the church daily observe or have an opportunity of observing, but which, once seen, is not easily forgotten. It is the long, gaunt, upright figure of a man, wrapped close in a shroud, which is knotted at the head and feet, and leaves only the face exposed—a face wan, worn,

almost ghastly, with the eyes closed as in death. This figure is executed in white marble, and stands on an urn of the same, as if it had just risen therefrom. The whole is placed in a black niche, which, by its contrast, enhances the death-like paleness of the shrouded figure. Above the canopy is an inscription recording that the man whose effigy stands beneath, though his ashes are mingled with western dust, looks towards Him whose name is the Orient.*

This monumental figure is not less remarkable in its history than in its aspect. It is the sole memorial which has survived from the ancient church of St. Paul destroyed by the great fire. For many generations it lay neglected in the crypt, amidst mutilated fragments of other less fortunate monuments of the past, till, three or four years ago, it was rescued from its gloomy abode underground and erected in its present position, corresponding, as nearly as circumstances allowed, to the place which it occupied in the old Cathedral before the fire.† The canopy and inscription were

* An allusion to the Vulgate rendering of Zech. vi. 12, "Ecce vir Oriens nomen ejus" (comp. iii. 8), translated "The man whose name is the Branch" in the Authorised Version. This text is quoted several times in Donne's Sermons, and appears to have been a favourite with him.

† In old St. Paul's it stood against a pier so as to face Eastward, the aspect being adapted to the words; but this position was impossible in the present Cathedral, unless the monument had been placed in some other part of the building.

restored from an ancient engraving. In its history and in its character alike this monument is a fit emblem of him whom it figures; for it speaks of a death, a resurrection, a saving as by fire. It is the effigy of John Donne, who was Dean of St. Paul's shortly before the outbreak of the Great Rebellion.

Moreover, it has a peculiar interest arising from the circumstances under which it was erected in the first instance. It was not such a memorial as Donne's surviving friends might think suitable to commemorate the deceased, but it was the very monument which Donne himself designed as a true emblem of his past life and his future hopes. His friend and biographer relates* that, being urged to give directions for his monument, he caused an urn to be carved; that he wrapped himself in a winding-sheet, and stood thereupon "with his eyes shut and with so much of the sheet turned aside as might show his lean, pale, and death-like face, which was purposely turned towards the East, from whence he expected the second coming of his and our Saviour Jesus;" that, in this posture, he had a picture of himself taken, which "he caused to be set by his bedside, where it continued, and became his hourly object till his death;" and that from this picture the sculpture was executed after his decease, the inscription having

* Walton's 'Life of Donne,' p. 141. The edition quoted is that published by Causton, "with some original notes by an Antiquary."

been written by Donne himself. In its quaint affectation and in its appalling earnestness this monument recalls the very mind of the man himself.

John Donne was born in 1573, the year after the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. He was the child of Roman Catholic parents, and in their faith he was brought up. At the age of eleven he went to Hart Hall, Oxford; at the age of fourteen, or thereabouts, he was "transplanted" to Trinity College, Cambridge. At neither University did he proceed to a degree, for his friends had a conscientious objection to his taking the required oath. He was still only in his seventeenth year, when he commenced the study of the law, and soon after he entered Lincoln's Inn. Of his subsequent life for some years we catch only glimpses here and there. He was a courtier and an associate of nobles and statesmen. He numbered among his friends and acquaintances nearly all the most famous literary men of the day—Ben Jonson, Francis Bacon, Sir Henry Wotton, Selden, Bishop Hall, Bishop Montague, Bishop Andrewes, George Herbert, Izaak Walton. He was a great traveller and a great linguist, a diligent student, a man of wide and varied accomplishments. His versatility is a constant theme of admiration with those who knew him.* At the age of twenty he wrote poems which

* See Grosart's preface to Donne's 'Poems,' ii. pp. xvi. *sq.* Coleridge also, comparing him with Shakespeare, speaks of his "lordliness of opulence," *ib.*, p. xxxviii.

his contemporaries regarded as masterpieces. His fame as a poet was greater in his own age than it has ever been since. During the last century, which had no toleration for subtle conceits and rugged rhythms, it was unduly depreciated; but now again it has emerged from its eclipse. No quaintness of conception and no recklessness of style and no harshness of metre can hide the true poetic genius which flashes out from his nobler pieces.

It has been said that God's heroes are made out of broken lives. There is indeed vouchsafed to the steady progressive growth of a career which has known no abrupt transition, and in which the days are "bound each to each by natural piety," a calm wisdom, a clear insight, an impressive influence, unattainable on any other terms; but for the fire, the passion, the impulsive energy which bears down all opposition, we must not uncommonly look to a dislocated life. This dislocation may be either of two kinds. It may be a dislocation of theological belief, like Luther's; or it may be a dislocation of moral character, like Ignatius Loyola's and John Bunyan's; the dislocation of the convert or the dislocation of the penitent. Donne's, like Augustine's, was both the one and the other.

He grew up to maturity, as we saw, a Roman Catholic; but while still a young man, he began to study the Roman controversy, as he himself says,

"with no inordinate haste nor precipitation in binding myself to any local religion." "I had a larger work to do," he writes, "than many other men." He tells us that in this investigation he "surveyed and digested the whole body of divinity" relating to the controversy; and he calls God to witness, that he "proceeded therein with humility and diffidence in himself," and with "frequent prayer and equal and indifferent affections."* As the result of this search after truth, he joined the Anglican communion. It seems to me that the influence of this change has impressed itself, as it could hardly fail to do, on his preaching. In saying this, I do not refer to the purely controversial parts, where the fact must be obvious. The remark applies to the general scope and character of his sermons. They owe their chief force to the intense earnestness with which he dwells on the atoning power of Christ's passion; and I cannot doubt that, from the intellectual side, his vividness and grasp of conception on this point owed much to his study of the Roman controversy.

Of the other dislocation, the discontinuity of his moral life, it is more painful to speak; but no study of Donne as a preacher would be at all adequate which failed to take account of this fact. His friend Izaak Walton, in an elegy written a few days after his death, has incidentally compared him to the chief

* Preface to his 'Pseudo-Martyr,' p. 3.

penitent in the Gospel. Contrasting with the light effusions of his earlier years the religious poems, which he assigns to a later period, he asks:—

> "Did his rich soul conceive
> And in harmonious holy numbers weave
> A crown of sacred sonnets, fit to adorn
> A dying martyr's brow, or to be worn
> On that blest head of Mary Magdalen
> After she wiped Christ's feet, but not till then.
> Did he—fit for such penitents as she
> And he to use—leave us a Litany
> Which all devout men love?"*

Of the fact I fear there can be little doubt that at one time he had led an immoral life. It is indeed most unjust to measure the self-accusations of the devout servant of God by the common standard of human language. The holiest men are the most exacting with themselves. Bitter cries of anguish—almost of despair—will be wrung from the saint for sins which would cost the worldling not one moment of sleeplessness and not one prick of remorse. Therefore, if they had stood alone, we ought not to have laid too great stress on those "tones of pain, thrills of contrition, stingings of accusation, wails over abiding stains and wounds, and passionate weeping," which, in the language of a recent writer,† are discernible in Donne's letters and sermons. But unhappily his shame is written across his extant poems in letters of fire. In some of these there are

* 'Life,' p. 154.

† Grosart, Preface to Donne's 'Poems,' vol. ii. p. xvii.

profligacies which it were vain to excuse as purely imaginative efforts of the poet, or unworthy condescensions to the base tastes of the age. We are driven to the conclusion that they reflect—at least to some extent—the sensuality of the man himself. Of such an offence I can offer no palliation. I know no crime more unpardonable in itself, or more fatal in its consequences, than this of prostituting the highest gifts of genius to a propaganda of vice and shame, this of poisoning the wells of a nation's literature and spreading moral death through generations yet unborn.* Donne's penitence was intense; he did all he could to retrieve the consequences of his sin. But he could not undo his work, could not blot out the printed page. "In his penitential years," says his biographer, "viewing some of those pieces that had been loosely—God knows, too loosely—scattered in his youth, he wished they had been abortive, or so short-lived that his own eyes had witnessed their funerals." †

But whatever may have been the sins of his youth and early manhood, his married life shows him a changed man. His clandestine union brought him only sorrows and trials from a worldly point of view;

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* It must be remembered however, that Donne was not in many cases responsible for the *publication* of his poems. They were published for the most part after his death.

† P. 106 *sq.* The sentence is somewhat differently worded in different editions.

but he was an affectionate and true husband, faithful to his wife during her lifetime, and loyal to her memory in a solitary widowhood of many years after her death.

The comparison of Donne with the great African father was too obvious to escape notice. It is touched upon by his earliest critic, his contemporary and biographer;* and it is drawn out by one of his latest. Of one of his religious poems the present Archbishop of Dublin writes: "It is the genuine cry of one engaged in that most terrible of all struggles, wherein, as we are winners or losers, we have won all or lost all." Then, adverting to this parallel, he adds; "There was in Donne the same tumultuous youth, the same entanglement in youthful lusts, the same conflict with these, and the same final deliverance from them; and then the same passionate and personal grasp of the central truths of Christianity, linking itself, as this did, with all that he had suffered and all that he had sinned, and all through which, by God's grace, he had victoriously struggled."† It is no marvel then to find Donne himself quoting St. Augustine more frequently than any of the fathers—this "sensible and blessed father," this "tender blessed father," as he affectionately calls him.

The bearing of these facts on his preaching will

* P. 65 *sq.*

† 'Household Book of English Poetry,' p. 404, quoted by Grosart, Donne's 'Poems,' vol. ii. p. xviii.

be evident. This moral experience was the complement of his intellectual experience. It taught him to feel and to absorb into himself, as the other taught him to understand and to reason about, the doctrine of Christ's atoning grace. What penitence, what tears, what merits of his own *could* wash out the stains with which such a life as his was imbrued? It was therefore no pious platitude, no barren truism, no phrase of conventional orthodoxy, but the profound conviction of a sinful, sorrowing, forgiven, thanksgiving man, when he speaks of "the sovereign balm of our souls, the blood of Christ Jesus."* Hear now these lines, which he wrote in his later years on a sick-bed, and which often after, when "sung to the organ by the choristers of St. Paul's," as he himself told a friend, "raised the affections of his heart and quickened his graces of zeal and gratitude."†

"Wilt Thou forgive that sin, through which I run,
And do run still, though still I do deplore?
When Thou hast done, Thou hast not done;
For I have more.

"Wilt Thou forgive that sin which I have won
Others to sin, and made my sin their door?
Wilt Thou forgive that sin which I did shun
A year or two, but wallow'd in a score?
When Thou hast done, Thou hast not done;
For I have more.

* Donne's 'Works,' vol. i. p. 53, ed. Alford. The references to the sermons below are taken from this edition, but I have collated the quotations, where I had the opportunity, with the original editions.

† Walton's 'Life,' p. 111.

"I have a sin of fear, that when I've spun
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;
But swear by Thyself, that at my death Thy Son
Shall shine, as He shines now and heretofore;
And having done that, Thou hast done;
I fear no more." *

"Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. . . . Tell me which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And He said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged." . . . .

"Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins which are many are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."†

Of Donne's romantic career it has been said, that his life is more poetical than his poetry.‡ We might without exaggeration adapt this epigram to his preaching, and say that his life was a sermon more eloquent than all his sermons.

If, then, I were asked to describe in few words the secret of his power as a preacher, I should say that it was the contrition and the thanksgiving of the penitent acting upon the sensibility of the poet.§

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* Donne's 'Poems,' vol. ii. p. 341 *sq.* (ed. Grosart).

† St. Luke vii. 40–47.

‡ Campbell, as represented by Milman, 'Annals of St. Paul's Cathedral,' p. 324; but Campbell himself, if I have found the right reference, makes the very commonplace remark that "the life of Donne is more interesting than his poetry" ('British Poets,' vol. iii. p. 73).

§ Donne seems to have the best right to the title of the poet-preacher—a designation which has sometimes been given to another.

Donne remained a layman till his forty-second year. He was pressed again and again by friends who knew his gifts, to enter Holy Orders, but for some years he hesitated. His hesitation was due partly to an unwillingness to incur the suspicion with his own conscience of being influenced by motives of self-interest, but still more by the recollection of his past life. He himself had long repented of the sins of his youth, and "banished them his affections:" but though forgiven by God, they were not forgotten by men; and he feared that they might bring some censure on himself, or (worse) some dishonour on his sacred calling, if he complied.*

At length he yielded, after much delay, to the repeated solicitations of the King himself. In the year 1614 he was ordained; and seven years afterwards he was promoted to the Deanery of St. Paul's, which he held till his death. He died in the 59th year of his age, having been sixteen years in orders.

As a layman he had been notably a poet; as a clergyman he was before all things a preacher. He had remarkable gifts as an orator, and he used them well. Henceforward preaching was the main business of his life. After he had preached a sermon "he never gave his eyes rest," we are told, "till he had chosen out a new text, and that night cast his

* Walton's 'Life,' p. 41.

sermon into a form and his text into divisions, and the next day he took himself to consult the fathers, and so commit his meditations to his memory, which was excellent."* On the Saturday he gave himself an entire holiday, so as to refresh body and mind, "that he might be enabled to do the work of the day following not faintly, but with courage and cheerfulness." When first ordained, he shunned preaching before town congregations. He would retire to some country church with a single friend, and so try his wings. His first sermon was preached in the quiet village of Paddington. But his fame grew rapidly; and he soon took his rank as the most powerful preacher of his day in the English Church. Others envied him and murmured, says an admirer, that, having been called to the vineyard late in the day, he received his penny with the first.†

More than a hundred and fifty of his sermons are published. Some of them were preached at Lincoln's Inn, where he held the Lectureship; others at St. Dunstan's-in-the-West, of which church he was vicar; others at Whitehall, in his turn as Royal Chaplain, or before the Court on special occasions; others, and these the most numerous, at St. Paul's. Of this last class a few were delivered at the Cross, by special appointment, but the majority within

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* Walton's 'Life,' p. 119.

† Elegy by Mr. R. B., attached to 'Poems,' by John Donne (1669), p. 393.

the Cathedral, when year after year, according to the rule which is still in force at St. Paul's, he preached as Dean at the great festivals of the Church, Christmas and Easter and Whitsunday, or when he expounded the Psalms assigned to his prebendal stall, or on various incidental occasions.

An eminent successor of Donne, the late Dean Milman, finds it difficult to "imagine, when he surveys the massy folios of Donne's sermons—each sermon spreads out over many pages—a vast congregation in the Cathedral or at Paul's Cross, listening not only with patience, but with absorbed interest, with unflagging attention, even with delight and rapture, to those interminable disquisitions." . . . "It is astonishing to us," he adds, "that he should hold a London congregation enthralled, unwearied, unsatiated." *

And yet I do not think that the secret of his domination is far to seek.

"Fervet immensusque ruit."

There is throughout an energy, a glow, an impetuosity, a force as of a torrent, which must have swept his hearers onward despite themselves. This rapidity of movement is his characteristic feature. There are faults in abundance, but there is no flagging from beginning to end. Even the least manageable subjects yield to his untiring energy. Thus he

* 'Annals of St. Paul's Cathedral,' p. 328.

occupies himself largely with the minute interpretation of Scriptural passages. This exegesis is very difficult of treatment before a large and miscellaneous congregation. But with Donne it is always interesting. It may be subtle, wire-drawn, fanciful, at times; but it is keen, eager, lively, never pedantic or dull. So again, his sermons abound in quotations from the fathers; and this burden of patristic reference would have crushed any common man. But here the quotations are epigrammatic in themselves; they are tersely rendered, they are vigorously applied, and the reader is never wearied by them. Donne is, I think, the most animated of the great Anglican preachers.

I select two or three examples out of hundreds which might be chosen, as exhibiting this eagerness of style, lit up by the genius of a poet and heated by the zeal of an evangelist. Hear this, for instance:

"God's house is the house of prayer. It is His court of requests. There He receives petitions; there He gives orders upon them. And you come to God in His house, as though you came to keep Him company, to sit down and talk with Him half an hour; or you come as ambassadors, covered in His presence, as though ye came from as great a Prince as He. You meet below, and there make your bargains for biting, for devouring usury, and then you come up hither to prayers, and so make God your broker. You rob and spoil and eat His people

as bread by extortion and bribery and deceitful weights and measures and deluding oaths in buying and selling, and then come hither, and so make God your receiver and His house a den of thieves . . . As if the Son of God were but the son of some lord that had been your schoolfellow in your youth, and so you continue a boldness to Him ever after; so because you have been brought up with Christ from your cradle and catechized in His name, His name becomes less reverend unto you; and *Sanctum et terribile*, holy and reverend, holy and terrible, should His name be."*

Or this:

"In the earth, in the grave, there is no distinction. The angel that shall call us out of that dust will not stand to survey who lies naked, who in a coffin, who in wood, who in lead, who in a fine, who in a coarser sheet; in that one day of the resurrection there is not a forenoon for lords to rise first and an afternoon for meaner persons to rise after. Christ was not whipped to save beggars, and crowned with thorns to save kings: He died, He suffered all, for all."†

Or hear this again, which was a favourite passage with Coleridge:

"Death comes equally to us all and makes us all equal when it comes. The ashes of an oak in the

* 'Works,' vol. iii. p. 217 *sq.* † 'Works,' vol. vi. p. 237.

chimney are no epitaph of that oak, to tell me how high or how large that was: it tells me not what flocks it sheltered while it stood, nor what men it hurt when it fell. The dust of great persons' graves is speechless too; it says nothing, it distinguishes nothing. As soon the dust of a wretch whom thou wouldst not, as of a prince whom thou couldst not, look upon, will trouble thine eyes, if the wind blow it thither: and when a whirlwind hath blown the dust of the churchyard into the church, and the man sweeps out the dust of the church into the churchyard, who will undertake to sift those dusts again, and to pronounce, 'This is the patrician, this is the noble flour; and this is the yeomanly, this the plebeian bran?'" *

Or listen again to this most terrible passage of all. I do not quote it from any sympathy with this mode of appeal to the Christian conscience, but merely as illustrating the appalling power of the preacher when he puts out his strength.

"*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;* but to fall out of the hands of the living God is a horror beyond our expression, beyond our imagination."

"That God should let my soul fall out of His hand into a bottomless pit, and roll an unremovable stone upon it, and leave it to that which it finds there (and

* 'Works,' vol. i. p. 241.

it shall find that there which it never imagined till it came thither), and never think more of that soul, never have more to do with it. That of that providence of God, that studies the life of every weed and worm and ant and spider and toad and viper, there should never, never any beam flow out upon me; that that God who looked upon me when I was nothing, and called me when I was not, as though I had been, out of the womb and depth of darkness, will not look upon me now, when, though a miserable and a banished and a damned creature, yet I am His creature still, and contribute something to His glory, even in my damnation; that that God who hath often looked upon me in my foulest uncleanness and when I had shut out the eye of the day, the sun, and the eye of the night, the taper, and the eyes of all the world, with curtains and windows and doors, did yet see me, and see me in mercy, by making me see that He saw me, and sometimes brought me to a present remorse and (for that time) to a forbearing of that sin, should so turn Himself from me to His glorious saints and angels, as that no saint nor angel nor Jesus Christ Himself should ever pray Him to look towards me, never remember Him that such a soul there is; that that God who hath so often said to my soul *Quare morieris?* 'Why wilt thou die?' and so often sworn to my soul *Vivit Dominus*, 'As the Lord liveth, I would not have thee die but live,' will neither let me die

nor let me live, but die an everlasting life and live an everlasting death; that that God who when He could not get into me by standing and knocking, by His ordinary means of entering, by His word, His mercies, hath applied His judgments, and hath shaked the house, this body, with agues and palsies, and set this house on fire with fevers and calentures, and frighted the master of the house, my soul, with horrors and heavy apprehensions, and so made an entrance into me; that that God should frustrate all His own purposes and practices upon me, and leave me and cast me away, as though I had cost Him nothing; that this God at last should let this soul go away as a smoke, as a vapour, as a bubble, and that then this soul cannot be a smoke, a vapour, nor a bubble, but must lie in darkness as long as the Lord of light is light itself, and never spark of that light reach to my soul. . . ." *

Listen to such words as I have read; and to complete the effect summon up in imagination the appearance and manner of the preacher. Recall him as he is seen in the portrait attributed to Vandyck, —the keen, importuning, "melting eye," † the thin, worn features, the poetic cast of expression, half pensive, half gracious. Add to this the sweet tones of his voice and the "speaking action," ‡

* 'Works,' vol. iii. p. 386 *sq.*
† Walton's 'Life,' p. 150.
‡ Elegy by Mr. Mayne, attached to 'Poems,' by John Donne (1669), p. 387.

which is described by eye-witnesses as more eloquent than the words of others, and you will cease to wonder at the thraldom in which he held his audience. "A preacher in earnest," writes Walton, "weeping sometimes *for* his auditory, sometimes *with* them: always preaching to himself; like an angel *from* a cloud but *in* none; carrying some, as St. Paul was, to heaven in holy raptures, and enticing others by a sacred art and courtship to amend their lives: here picturing a vice so as to make it ugly to those who practised it, and a virtue so as to make it beloved even by those that loved it not . . ."* Indeed we cannot doubt that he himself was alive to that feeling, which he ascribes to the "blessed fathers" when preaching, "a holy delight to be heard, and to be heard with delight." †

Donne's sermons are not faultless models of pulpit oratory. From this point of view they cannot be studied as the sermons of the great French preachers may be studied. Under the circumstances, this was almost an impossibility. Preaching his hour's sermon once or twice weekly, he had not time to arrange and re-arrange, to prune, to polish, to elaborate. As it is, we marvel at the profusion of learning, the richness of ideas and imagery, the abundance in all kinds, poured out by a preacher who thus lived, as it were, from hand to mouth.

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* 'Life,' p. 69. † 'Works,' vol. i. p. 98.

Moreover, the taste of the age for fantastic imagery, for subtle disquisition, for affectations of language and of thought, exercised a fascination over him. Yet even here he is elevated above himself and his time by his subject. There is still far too much of that conceit of language, of that subtlety of association, of that "sport with ideas," which has been condemned in his verse compositions; but, compared with his poems, his sermons are freedom and simplicity itself. And, whenever his theme rises, he rises too; and then in the giant strength of an earnest conviction he bursts these green withes which a fantastic age has bound about him, as the thread of tow snaps at the touch of fire. Nothing can be more direct or more real than his eager, impetuous eloquence, when he speaks of God, of redemption, of heaven, of the sinfulness of human sin, of the bountifulness of Divine Love.

At such moments he is quite the most modern of our older Anglican divines. He speaks directly to our time, because he speaks to all times. If it be the special aim of the preacher to convince of sin and of righteousness and of judgment, then Donne deserves to be reckoned the first of our Classic preachers. We may find elsewhere more skilful arrangement, more careful oratory, more accurate exegesis, more profuse illustration; but here is the light which flashes and the fire which burns.

Donne's learning was enormous; and yet his

sermons probably owe more to his knowledge of men than to his knowledge of books. The penitent is too apt to shrink into the recluse. Donne never yielded to this temptation. He himself thus rebukes the mistaken extravagance of penitence: "When men have lived long from God, they never think they come near enough to Him, except they go beyond Him."* No contrition was more intense than his; but he did not think to prove its reality by cutting himself off from the former interests and associations of his life. He had been a man of the world before; and he did not cease to be a man in the world now. "Beloved," he says—this term "beloved" is his favourite mode of address—"Beloved, salvation itself being so often presented to us in the names of glory and of joy, we cannot think that the way to that glory is a sordid life affected here, an obscure, a beggarly, a negligent abandoning of all ways of preferment or riches or estimation in this world, for the glory of heaven shines down in these beams hither. . . . As God loves a cheerful giver, so He loves a cheerful taker that takes hold of His mercies and His comforts with a cheerful heart."† This healthy, vigorous good sense is the more admirable in Donne, because it is wedded to an intense and passionate devotion.

I wish that time would allow me to multiply

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* 'Works,' vol. ii. p. 31. † Ib., vol. ii. p. 142.

examples of his lively imagination flashing out in practical maxims and lighting up the common things of life; as for instance, where he pictures the general sense of insecurity on the death of Elizabeth: "Every one of you in the city were running up and down like ants with their eggs bigger than themselves, every man with his bags, to seek where to hide them safely."* Or where he enforces the necessity of watchfulness against minor temptations: "As men that rob houses thrust in a child at the window, and he opens greater doors for them, so lesser sins make way for greater."† Or when he describes the little effect of preaching on the heartless listener: "He hears but the logic or the rhetoric or the ethic or the poetry of the sermon, but the sermon of the sermon he hears not."‡ Of such pithy sayings Donne's sermons are an inexhaustible storehouse, in which I would gladly linger; but I must hasten on to speak of one other feature before drawing to a close. Irony is a powerful instrument in the preacher's hands, if he knows how to wield it; otherwise it were better left alone. The irony of Donne is piercing. Hear the withering scorn which he pours on those who think to condone sinful living by a posthumous bequest: "We hide our sins in His house by hypocrisy all our lives, and we hide them at our deaths, perchance,

* 'Works,' vi. p. 137. † Ib., vol. ii. p. 556. ‡ Ib., vol. i. p. 72.

with a hospital. And truly we had need do so; when we have impoverished God in His children by our extortions, and wounded Him and lamed Him in them by our oppressions, we had need to provide God an hospital."* Or hear this again, on the criticism of sermons: "Because God calls preaching foolishness, you take God at His word and think preaching a thing under you. Hence it is that you take so much liberty in censuring and comparing preacher and preacher."† And lastly, observe the profound pathos and awe which is veiled under the apparent recklessness of these daring words: "At how cheap a price was Christ tumbled up and down in this world! It does almost take off our pious scorn of the low price at which Judas sold Him, to consider that His Father sold Him to the world for nothing."‡

For preaching Donne lived; and in preaching he died. He rose from a sick bed and came to London to take his customary sermon at Whitehall on the first Friday in Lent. Those who saw him in the pulpit, says Walton quaintly,§ must "have asked that question in Ezekiel, 'Do these bones live?'" The sermon was felt to be the swan's dying strain. Death was written in his wan and wasted features, and spoke through his faint and hollow voice.

The subject was in harmony with the circumstances. He took as his text the passage in the

* 'Works,' vol. ii. p. 555.
† Ib., vol. ii. p. 219.
‡ Ib., vol. i. p. 61.
§ 'Life,' p. 135 *sq.*

Psalms, "Unto God the Lord belong the issues of death." His hearers said at the time that "Dr. Donne had preached his own funeral sermon."

The sermon is published. It betrays in part a diminution of his wonted fire and animation. We seem to see the preacher struggling painfully with his malady. But yet it is remarkable. The theme and the circumstances alike invest it with a peculiar solemnity; and there are flashes of the poet-preacher still.

"This whole world," he says, "is but a universal churchyard, but one common grave: and the life and motion that the greatest persons have in it is but as the shaking of buried bodies in their graves by an earthquake."*

"The worm is spread under thee, and the worm covers thee. *There* is the mats and carpet that lie under, and *there* is the state and the canopy that hangs over the greatest of the sons of men."†

"The tree lies as it falls, it is true, but yet it is not the last stroke that fells the tree, nor the last word nor the last gasp that qualifies the man."‡

Hear now the closing words, and you will not be at a loss to conceive the profound impression which they must have left on his hearers, as the dying utterance of a dying man.

"There we leave you in that blessed dependency,

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* 'Works,' vol. vi. p. 283. † Ib., p. 288. ‡ Ib., p. 290.

to hang upon Him that hangs upon the Cross. There bathe in His tears, there suck at His wounds, and lie down in peace in His grave, till He vouchsafes you a resurrection and an ascension into that kingdom which He hath purchased for you with the inestimable price of His incorruptible blood. Amen."

Amen it was. He had prayed that he might die in the pulpit, or (if not this) that he might die of the pulpit; and his prayer was granted. From this sickness he never recovered; the effort hastened his dissolution; and, after lingering on a few weeks, he died on the last day of March, 1631.

This study of Donne as a preacher will be fitly closed with the last stanza from his poem entitled, 'Hymn to God, my God, in my sickness,' which sums up the broad lesson of his life and teaching.

"So in *His* purple wrapped, receive me, Lord;
By these *His* thorns give me His other crown;
And as to others' souls I preached Thy Word,
Be this my text, my sermon to mine own:
Therefore, that He may raise, the Lord throws down."†

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* 'Works,' vol. vi. p. 298. † 'Poems,' vol. ii. p. 340.

BARROW,

THE EXHAUSTIVE PREACHER.

"But godliness is profitable unto all things."—1 *Tim.* iv. 8.

Hospital Sermons an old institution—A Spital Sermon in 1671—Sketch of the Preacher, Dr. Barrow—His studies—His life—Character of his preaching—His combativeness—His exhaustiveness—Advantage of his methods—His objects—His account of his own times—His sturdy Morality—Its foundation in his Theology—Moral and Intellectual truth the natural food of the soul—His sermons chiefly devoted to practical duties—Character of his doctrinal Sermons—Deficiency of his theology—His bold appeal to reason—Its strength and its weakness—Comparison with our own times—Value of his example.

ONE of my duties on this occasion * is to invite contributions to the Fund collected throughout London this day for the Hospitals of the Metropolis, and my other duty suggests an interesting historical parallel. The idea of a special appeal once a year for all the Hospitals is, in substance at all events, some centuries old. In some fields near Bethnal Green there existed in old times a Priory and Hospital,

* Hospital Sunday, June 17, 1877.

dedicated to the honour of our Lord and the Virgin Mary, and commonly called St. Mary Spital. In the churchyard of the Priory, now Spital Square, was in old times a pulpit-cross, something like that which was once in St. Paul's Churchyard; and here originally were preached every year what were known as the Spital, or Hospital, Sermons. It is said to have been * for a long time a custom on Good Friday, in the afternoon, for some learned man, by appointment of the Prelates, to preach a sermon at Paul's Cross, treating of Christ's passion. On the three next Easter holydays, other learned men, by a like appointment, used to preach in the afternoon at the said Spital on the Article of Christ's resurrection; and then on the Sunday after Easter, before noon, another learned man at Paul's Cross was to make rehearsal of these four sermons, either commending or reproving, as was thought convenient; and he was then to make a sermon himself, which in all were five sermons in one. At all these sermons the Lord Mayor, with his brethren the aldermen, were accustomed to be present. The pulpit was broken down in the Grand Rebellion, but the sermons were continued, with the old name of the Spital Sermons, at St. Bride's and elsewhere, and they retained some associations connected with the old Hospital. In 1740 we have Bishop Butler

* Peter Cunningham's 'Handbook of London,' 1850, p. 463; Maitland's 'London,' 1756, pp. 799, 800.

preaching one of them, and the institutions for which he preached are specified as Christ's Hospital, for children; St. Bartholomew's and St. Thomas's Hospitals, for the wounded, maimed, sick, and diseased; Bridewell, for the vagrant and other indigent and miserable people; Bethlehem, for distracted men and women; and the London Workhouse in Bishopsgate Street. The word Hospital was used in the width of its old signification, but to all intents and purposes this was a Hospital day.

It seems a pity, if such a suggestion may be permitted, that the new institution of Hospital Sunday has not been affiliated on this old custom. But to pass to my other subject. On Wednesday, in Easter week, in the year 1671, a very remarkable sermon was preached at the Spital, "On the Duty and Reward of Bounty to the Poor." There is a tradition that it occupied three hours and a half in delivery; but since the Court of Aldermen desired the Preacher to print his sermon, "with what farther he had prepared to deliver at that time;" and since the sermon as now printed occupies not more than ninety-four octavo pages, it is thought there may be some exaggeration in this tradition. The Preacher is said to have begun to be weary with standing so long; but it is not recorded that there was any weariness on the part of the audience. On the contrary, as we have seen, having heard a good deal, they desired to read more; and no wonder, for the sermon

is almost an exhaustive treatise on the subject. It is on the text, "He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor, his righteousness endureth for ever, his horn shall be exalted with honour." After some observations on the comprehensiveness of the liberality thus described, the preacher goes on, as he says, to propound several considerations "whereby the plain reasonableness, the great weight, the high worth and excellency of this duty, together with its strict connection with other principal duties of piety, will appear." *

First, he observes that there is no sort of duty more expressly commanded in Scripture, so much so that righteousness and mercifulness are almost interchangeable terms; Charity, in fact, being the main point of religion, and mercy and bounty the chief parts of Charity. He proceeds to discuss the obligations to this virtue arising from our relation to God, from our relation to the poor themselves, from the character and origin of wealth, and the relative positions of the rich and the poor. It is characteristic of him that, preaching to a rich audience, himself a staunch Cavalier and a champion of established order, he does not hesitate to declare that, in the existing degree, the differences of wealth and poverty are not natural. It was sin, he exclaims, which "begot these ingrossings

* Works of Isaac Barrow, D.D. Edited by the Rev. A. Napier, Cambridge, 1859. Vol. i. p. 1 *sqq*. All other references to Barrow's works are made to this edition.

and enclosures of things; it forged those two small pestilent words, *meum* and *tuum*," and we are bound in some measure to redress the balance thus disturbed. But so far as the distinctions of rich and poor are divinely appointed, it is in order that a charitable intercourse of mutual gratitude and obligation should be established between them. The poor, moreover, have the special distinction of representing the form assumed by our Saviour Himself. "The greatest princes and potentates in the world," exclaims the Preacher, "the most wealthy and haughty of us all, but for one poor beggar had been irrecoverably miserable;" and "if we will do poverty right, we must rather for His dear sake and memory defer an especial respect and veneration thereto." All these points are elaborated in detail, and vigorously enforced with quotations and illustrations. The Preacher pursues every excuse for uncharitableness into its hiding-place, and drags them forth one by one. A Christian, in a word, is one who has pledged himself to imitate the benign and charitable Son of God, and "a Christian niggard plainly is no Christian," but a blemish, a reproach, and a scandal to that honourable name." Finally, he quotes examples of liberality, not omitting that of the City of London itself, and briefly recounts the honours which the text attaches to bountifulness.

Such a recital of the obligations, the reasons, and the blessings of Charity ought not to be without its

effect on our liberality this afternoon; and, at all events, it may afford some idea of one of the chief characteristics of the Preacher in question. But before dwelling on these characteristics, let us endeavour to realise the man himself. He was a man who, in several respects, ought to command especial interest at this time. Though this was the first sermon he ever printed, and he was but forty years of age, he had long held a very distinguished position at Cambridge and was one of the King's Chaplains. Twenty-five years before he had entered Trinity College, Cambridge, and ever since then, with the sole interval of a year or two spent in travel, Cambridge had been his home. During that time he had devoted himself with astonishing industry, vigour, and success to almost every study which the University offered. The period was the very turning-point in the history of that great University. Within the space of Dr. Barrow's career—for that was the name of the Preacher—had that bent been given to it which has since rendered it in a peculiar degree the home of the mathematical and physical sciences. It was just at this moment, in the middle of the seventeenth century, that the new experimental philosophy, to which Lord Bacon, himself a Cambridge man, had given so momentous an impulse, began decisively to assert its predominance. When Barrow entered Cambridge, no branch of philosophical science except

Medicine was represented by a Professor; there was only one lecture in Mathematics, and these were so elementary that Barrow describes it as a great achievement "that men had ceased to tremble at the name of Euclid, and had even triumphed over the mysteries of Algebra." But in 1663 the Lucasian Professorship of Mathematics was founded. Barrow became the first Professor; and one year before he preached this Spital Sermon he had resigned this Professorship, and had been succeeded by one of his own pupils, whose name was Isaac Newton. During the time he held the Professorship he had approached to the very verge of one of Newton's greatest mathematical discoveries; and had he given his life to the subject, the master might have been only second to the pupil. But Barrow's energy could not be confined to one subject. Three years before his appointment to the Mathematical Chair he had been elected to the Professorship of Greek; and he was confessedly one of the first Greek and Latin scholars of the day. But this was far from all. He was intensely interested in the rising experimental sciences, and studied with great success anatomy, botany and chemistry. Had he been unbiassed, he might even have made Medicine his profession, but he held one of those preferments, so obnoxious to modern ideas, now known as clerical fellowships; and on the eve of their probable abolition let it be remembered to their credit that, in

this instance at least, if they spoilt a great mathematician or natural philosopher, they did at least foster a great divine.

Barrow felt that his oath bound him to make Divinity the end of his studies. It would seem that about the time his Spital Sermon was preached, he had finally devoted himself to this career; and in the following year Charles II. appointed him to the Mastership of Trinity College, saying that he gave it to the best scholar in England. He held the post only five years, dying in 1677, in his forty-seventh year, after preaching the only other Sermon which he lived to prepare for publication, that delivered at the Guildhall on Good Friday, 1677, on the Passion of our Blessed Saviour. One or two more touches will complete his portraiture sufficiently for our purpose. He was the son of a wealthy citizen, who suffered much for his adherence to the cause of the King; and when the authority of the Church and the King was supplanted at Cambridge by Parliamentary Commissioners, Barrow distinguished himself as an undergraduate by his bold, though not obtrusive, adherence to the old cause. As a boy at the Charterhouse he was chiefly distinguished by his pugnacity; but as the troubles of the time began, he settled down to serious and diligent study. Lastly, as another point which should command attention for him at the present moment, during his travels he spent a year at Constantinople, and he

has left an account of the Turks and their religion, in prose * and verse,† which has been recently said to afford, even now, the best short account of the subject existing.‡ Unfortunately both these pieces are in Latin; but could I trouble you with a quotation,§ you would see that his impressions of the Turks and their religion do not differ much from those which are most current at this hour.

Such, however, was the man who, in a Spital Sermon of the year 1671, poured on the heads of the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of the City of London that flood of discussion, exhortation, denunciation, argument, encouragement, which I just now described. There is, perhaps, something in it which recalls the early character of the boy. There is a certain pugnacity about the form of the argument which suggests that the old spirit was still alive in him. Throughout the Sermon he seems to have before him the character whom he describes as "the Christian niggard;" and he appears to take a delight in demolishing this monster with as many and as vigorous blows as his own strength and the en-

* 'Works,' vol. ix. p. 386. † Ibid., p. 481.

‡ 'Quarterly Review,' October 1869.

§ "Sæva superstitio, bellisque creata ciendis,
Indulgens iræ, pronæque effusa remittens
Lora voluptati, Martis simul improba fautrix
Et Veneris, votis ac moribus apta ferinis,
Barbara corripuit subitâ præcordia flammâ."
De Religione Turcicâ, Ἀκέφαλον, ll. 16–20.

durance of his audience will allow him to inflict. Almost all his sermons are marked by something of this combative character—a disposition fostered probably by the fierce and fiery temper of the times in which he had been trained. It assumes, however, no mere contentious form, but passes into a noble and burning indignation against vices, weaknesses, follies, and stupidities of all kinds. It may be owned, perhaps, he makes sometimes too little difference between these several sources of human error; and few things seem more to vex his soul than the perverseness and stupidity of mankind. His own nature is so vigorous, healthy, and well balanced, that he can make little allowance for feebler souls. Whatever he touches becomes as clear and definite to him as the mathematical problems he had worked out with Isaac Newton. Every sermon is like the demonstration of a theorem. It seems to conclude with a *quod erat probandum*, "which was to be proved," and to develop into a problem, *quod est faciendum*, "which must be done." There is no escaping from this vigorous athlete, this master of the whole science of logical and rhetorical attack and defence. He pursues his antagonist into every corner of the ground, allows him, with the utmost fairness, to avail himself of all conceivable defences, and breaks them all down, one after the other, with irresistible, and sometimes, it may be, only too

numerous blows. He has no idea of giving quarter in intellectual warfare. We are concerned with him mainly as a Preacher, and his treatise, therefore, on the Pope's Supremacy * can only be referred to by way of illustration. But it is the finest example of this "ability to contend," as Bacon calls it, to be found in his works; and judging by what is daily passing around us, it is not soon likely to become obsolete. He shows that the Pope's plea of Supremacy involves at least seven distinct suppositions:—that St. Peter, by our Lord's appointment, had a primacy over the Apostles; that this primacy was not personal but derivable to his successors; that St. Peter was Bishop of Rome, and that he continued so till his decease; that the Bishops of Rome by Divine institution have a universal supremacy and jurisdiction over the Church; that, in fact, since St. Peter's time, they have continually enjoyed and exercised this power; and lastly, that it is indefectible and unchangeable. The mere statement of this chain of suppositions is in itself a crushing argument; but Barrow pursues each one of them into all its ramifications with the utmost vigour and vehemence and with the most ample learning, until the field within the limit of his survey seems completely cleared of hostile forces. The same method, in varying degrees, is constantly reflected in his sermons, and he emerges from every

* 'Works,' vol. viii.

one of them a victor over some form of sin or error with which he has been in mortal combat.

But we should do him great injustice, as my sketch of his Spital Sermon will, I hope, have shown, if we regarded this as more than his first aspect as a preacher. This, if I may so express it, is in great measure the natural man, and in the preacher we have the man of grace and of piety overpowering it, and moulding natural tendencies to loftier purposes. In the first place, that minuteness of detail, that exhaustiveness, as Charles II. characterised it, into which his dialectical habits led him, produced a new and more gracious effect when applied to the illustration of moral and spiritual truth. There are two great types of mind, with two distinct methods of dealing with such subjects. The one seizes some great truth, which it kindles into a new illumination, and then leaves all the details of fact and theory to be discerned by this central light. The other goes through these details themselves, examines them one by one, and gradually builds up with them a harmonious whole. Barrow's mind is of the latter cast. Every sermon, like the one I have analysed, is exhaustive in the sense of being a comprehensive discussion of all the component parts of his subject. He goes through them all, one by one, step by step, and places each in its right position. The process, it must be owned, is sometimes tedious, but it must also be allowed

that the result in the hands of a strong and laborious workman like Barrow is vastly impressive. When the quarry is exhausted, and all the stones are in their appointed places, we have a massive and a solid edifice before us, complete from its foundations to its roof, and strongly compacted in every part. The essential merit of this process consists in the completeness and exhaustiveness with which it is carried into effect, and with Barrow the workmanship is in this respect of the very highest excellence.

There are occasions, indeed, when such a method necessarily fails. It is hard to imagine an audience, even in former days, really listening to even one half of the full development of the argument of the Spital Sermon. Yet to any one who will have the patience to peruse the discourse as a whole, and to contemplate it as a whole, it has a force which could hardly be otherwise exerted. It is when we see that a virtue like that of bountifulness has all these various bearings—how it touches our relations to God, to our neighbour, to the poor, to ourselves, to our peace of mind and to our welfare here and hereafter—it is only when we contemplate a virtue in all this manifold extent of its operations that we can be fully impressed by all its practical importance. Barrow loves to dwell on details, not as details, but as essential to the full production of the total effect.

"In such manner," for instance, he says in one place,* "ought we diligently to survey and judiciously to estimate the effects of Divine beneficence, examining every part, and descanting upon every circumstance thereof: like those that contemplate some rare beauty, or some excellent picture; some commending the exact proportions, some the graceful features, some the lively colours discernible therein." In this manner, as you will have observed, does Barrow in his Spital Sermon, and in many others, fill up all the lights and shades, and depict all the varying colours of the subject he is portraying; until bit by bit, under his patient and steady hand, its great and impressive unity overshadows us. Sometimes, indeed, as we have seen, he goes far beyond the reach of the powers of attention in modern congregations; yet it must also, I think, be allowed that, when this method is kept within reasonable limits, we ought not to be so impatient of it as we are in these days apt to be. In every other form of formal public lecture we not only tolerate, but we even demand a length which would not be incompatible with the delivery of many among Barrow's Sermons. If some law of Nature is to be expounded at the Royal Institution, nobody complains that the Lecturer occupies the better part of an hour; and the laws and relations of our moral nature are certainly

* Sermon "On the Duty of Thanksgiving." 'Works,' vol. i. p. 347.

not less intricate, nor less various, than those of the physical world. Barrow, one might sometimes think, carries into his theological and moral demonstrations something of the character of the experimental philosopher. He is laying bare all the consequences and the connections of moral laws; and he has a right to demand some patience from his audience. At all events, if they give it, they are abundantly repaid; and if from such a discourse as the Spital Sermon a man is simply impressed with the complexity, the intricacy, the multitude and the magnitude of moral and spiritual influences, in that impression alone he has acquired a conviction which it would be difficult otherwise to convey to him.

Such were Barrow's methods. But as with all really able men, they were strictly subordinated to his objects; and what, let us next ask, were the purposes to which this strong, clear-sighted, and vehement mind, stored with all the old and all the new learning, devoted itself in the full force of its manhood? To appreciate the answer to that question, it is necessary to bear in mind the circumstances of the nation at the time when Barrow, under a sense of duty, devoted himself to theology. He himself, in a sermon on the King's happy return,* preached, however, sixteen years after that event, gives a melancholy description of his times—how, "from dissensions in opinion, violent factions and feuds were raging, the hearts of

* 'Works,' vol. i. p. 404.

men boiling with fierce animosities . . . beyond any hopes or visible means of reconcilement;" how "the fences of discipline were cast down," "the dread of authority exceedingly abated," while turbulent, malicious and crafty spirits were watching for occasions to subvert the Church and disturb the State. He denounces "the prodigious growth of atheism, infidelity, and profaneness; the rife practice of all impieties, iniquities, and impurities;" "the extreme dissoluteness in manners . . . the great stupidity and coldness of people as to all concerns of religion;" and meanwhile "the world about us in combustion, cruel wars raging everywhere, and Christendom weltering in blood." It must be owned this is hardly an overdrawn description of the position of a great part of English society and of the world at large in the reign of Charles II., towards the days of the Popish Plot, amidst the wars of Louis XIV., and when we ourselves seemed drifting towards another religious and civil war. Remembering that all these disturbances and confusions, and above all the civil strife which had stained the country with blood, had been set on foot in the name of religion, often in the name of some exclusive theological theory, and that different sects had torn the country to pieces for the sake of schemes of ecclesiastical discipline, it was not wonderful if for the moment a strong tide seemed to set towards distrust of all religion, recklessness of morals, and mere selfishness.

But Barrow had been brought up under sober and religious influences, and throughout his life at the University he exhibited a singular steadiness of pious and conscientious convictions. We have no means of tracing the full course of his thoughts, but from the moment that he comes before us, we find him possessed with a deep and settled persuasion that in the great and broad truths of religion lie the foundations of morality, while in morality lie the foundations of individual and national welfare. He sets himself, accordingly, with all the strength of one of the most resolute natures, to bring these cardinal principles home to the men of his day, and to vindicate once more the simple and practical, but none the less potent, influence inherent in the great elementary truths of the Christian religion. He leaves on one side, or brushes away, the thorny controversies with which religion has been overlaid: he can hardly speak respectfully of even the grand controversy of the Reformation respecting justification by faith; and he goes straight to the broad facts of Christian belief and moral duty. He starts, indeed, with the most vivid and overpowering realisation of GOD. The Divine Being is not to him a mere theological principle assumed on grounds of science, or believed on mere authority. God, in his own words, is "the most intelligible object" of our minds, meaning that "we are capable of knowing more, more clearly, more assuredly of God than of any

other, yea, than of all other things."* These are not careless expressions. He supports them in one of his finest arguments, in a sermon entitled,† "An adequate knowledge of God attainable by man." Of other objects, he says, we can perceive very little, "only some faint colours, some superficial shapes, some dull objects; while their intrinsic nature, their chief radical properties remain enclosed and debarred from our sight in an inaccessible darkness. But of God we may apprehend (in some degree according to our natural capacity) His most essential attributes; *τὰ μεγαλεῖα τοῦ Θεοῦ*, His (magnificences) great things; His infinite goodness, wisdom and power." "We cannot," he exclaims, "without shutting our eyes, exclude that light of Divine glory which fills and illustrates the world; without stopping our ears we cannot but hear that universal shout (that real harmony of the spheres) which all creatures in heaven and earth consent in utterance to his praise." He proceeds to illustrate this idea in a magnificent image, which could only have occurred to a great theologian who was also a real man of science. "What the sun is," he says, "in the visible world, most visible himself, and imparting visibility to all other things," so is God in the intelligible world; "and as whatever we behold with our bodily eyes, 'tis not so much the thing itself which we see,

* 'Works,' vol. iv. pp. 477-8 † Ibid., vol. iv. pp. 461-491.

as an emanation from the sun; an imperfect image, as it were, of him reflected from the specular surface of some body, in itself opaque and invisible; a mere draught of the sun; stained by the colours and fashioned by the shape of that body; so is God in the world of things intelligible: most brightly radiant to our intellectual eyes; (*He is light, and in Him there is no kind of darkness*), He is Himself most intelligible, and communicates intelligibility to all other things: *With Thee,* saith David, *is the fountain of life; in Thy light shall we see light.* 'Tis by His light that all things are illuminated; every creature is, as it were, *speculum Dei;* whatever we discern in them is but some indirect glimpse of His light, some faint shadow of His power and perfection: and in this sense, *Jupiter est quodcunque vides.*"

Barrow does not often rise to this height, nor indeed, does any one else; but this faith in God, almost amounting to an abiding vision, is combined in Barrow's mind with a conviction, all the more deep and important because apparently spontaneous and natural to him, that our point of contact with the Divine nature is to be found in the pursuit of all truth, no matter of what kind, but above all in the truth of the conscience and in the everyday duties of morality. "Truth," he says, "is the natural food of our soul, towards which it hath a greedy appetite;" and all knowledge, accordingly, all the sciences of which he was such a master, are claimed

by him as the soul's fitting endowments. But it is in moral truth that he sees the most immediate participation of the Divine nature. In more than one place he uses the term "conscience" as practically equivalent to religion or godliness; and in numberless places he expresses the main object of religion to be the encouragement and restoration among us of the ordinary virtues of morality. Omitting many passages, it will be sufficient to quote one which brings into strong contrast the character of the religion for which he was contending and that which had brought so much misery on the nation. "Religion," he says, in one of his early University Sermons,* "consisteth not in fair profession and glorious pretences, but in real practice; not in a pretentious adherence to any sect or party, but in a sincere love of goodness, and dislike of naughtiness, wherever discovering itself . . . not in a nice orthodoxy . . . but in a sincere love of truth, in a hearty approbation of, and compliance with, the doctrines fundamentally good, and necessary to be believed; not in harsh censuring and virulently inveighing against others, but in carefully amending our own ways; . . . not in a furious zeal for or against trivial circumstances, but in a conscionable practising the substantial parts of religion . . . in a word, Religion consists in nothing else but doing what becomes our

* 'Works,' vol. i. p. 171.

relation to God, in a conformity or similitude to His nature, and in a willing obedience to His holy will." "It was the design of Divine goodness," as he elsewhere expresses himself, "in sending our Saviour, to render us good and happy, to deliver us from sin and misery, to instruct us in the knowledge, and to habituate us to the practice of all virtue, and thereby to qualify us for the enjoyment of a blessed immortality."

Such are the grand though simple objects which Barrow, from the first, has in view; and accordingly the vast majority of his sermons are devoted to the illumination of daily duty by the light of the Christian religion and of the Scriptures. They are on such subjects as the "Pleasantness of Religion;" "The Profitableness of Godliness;" "Upright Walking Sure Walking;" "The Duty of Prayer and of Thanksgiving;" "Not to Offend in Word;" "Against Foolish Talking and Jesting;" "Of Rash and Vain Swearing;" "Against Evil Speaking in general;" against "The Folly of Slander;" "Of Quietness, and Doing our own Business;" "Of being Imitators of Christ;" "Of Submission to the Divine Will," "Of Contentment;" "Of Industry in General, and in our Particular Calling;" "Of Obedience;" of "Providing things Honest in the Sight of all Men." But he always endeavours to lay the foundation of his argument in the great truths of the Gospel, and there are several Sermons

specially devoted to these. Above all, there is a series of "Sermons on the Creed,"* of which the character, as distinguished from the great work of his contemporary, Pearson, is that he dwells on the vital and operative, rather than on the formal and scientific, side of our faith. When vindicating, for instance, our Saviour's Messiahship, he dwells with especial force, and with devout detail, on the supreme moral excellence of His character and His life. In short, Barrow is at once the most convinced of theologians and the most earnest of moralists; and he throws his whole energy into the task of reinforcing religion by morality and morality by religion. He does not, indeed, except in a few remarkable instances, such as I have quoted, deal with the philosophical aspect of the great truths of the Christian faith; nor is he even much concerned with the deeper moral problems of human nature. The sense of sin, with the profound questionings it aroused in the minds of men like Augustine, Luther, or even Bunyan, is not in any similar degree the motive power of his theology. His nature seems, perhaps, too sound and vigorous to have been entangled in the inward struggle to which the combined weakness and strength of an Augustine gave rise. He regarded Christianity, in fact, rather as the necessary condition of a sound and healthy human

* 'Works,' vols. v., vi., vii.

nature than as the remedy of a diseased one. It seems to his mind part of the essential constitution of things, and he inculcated it as the primary law of existence.

Such was the work of Barrow, and he did it successfully. He accomplished it, moreover, by no other means than by a manly appeal to the reason, the good sense, and the good feeling of the men of his day. He refused to address his appeal to any lower Court than that of a reasonable and enlightened conscience. "God," he says, "neither doth nor can enjoin us faith without reason; but therefore doth require it as matter of duty from us, because he hath furnished sufficient reason to persuade us." Indeed, it is one of his most essential characteristics that he is almost unable to conceive of a man acting under any other motive than a firm intellectual persuasion. "If we do seriously weigh the case," he says,* "we shall find, that to require faith without reason is to demand an impossibility; for faith is an effect of persuasion, and persuasion is nothing else but the application of some reason to the mind, apt to draw forth its assent. No man, therefore, can believe he knoweth not what or why; he that truly believeth must apprehend the proposition, and he must discern its connection with some principle of truth, which as more notorious to him he before

* 'Works,' vol. v. p. 51.

doth admit; otherwise he doth only pretend to believe, out of some design, or from affection to some party; his faith is not so much really faith, as hypocrisy, craft, fondness, or faction." There is, it must be allowed, too much rigidity in this definition; it makes too little allowance for the appeal of faith to those instincts of the heart which lie deeper than the intellect, and at the same time are nearer the surface of human nature. For instance, it prevents Barrow apprehending, as has been already observed, the depth and importance of the great controversy of the early years of the Reformation respecting faith. But if this be an error, it is at all events one which his countrymen would be very ready to excuse, and which was, perhaps, especially welcome after the deluge of irrational enthusiasm with which the country had been flooded. It is at least an error on the manly side; and it requires, perhaps, an intrepidity like that of Barrow—the same kind of daring with which, on his voyage to Constantinople, he fought one of the guns of his ship against an Algerine pirate—to be thus prepared, as it were, to stake the whole success of our cause on the superiority of the intellectual batteries we can bring into action. But Englishmen love a good fighter; and as long as men admire manly appeals to reason, free from the slightest touch of affectation, so long will Barrow demand the attention, and extort the respect, of

every one who is competent to enter into the Christian controversy.

Accordingly, though there may have been, perhaps, in the English Church, profounder or more subtle theologians, more eloquent or more polished Preachers, there has been no one who has exhibited more forcibly the harmony of the Christian faith with the moral convictions, the scientific progress, and the solid learning of Englishmen. Barrow emerges from amidst the confusion of his time like a well-armed champion, trained in every moral and intellectual exercise, the representative alike of the old and the new learning, of classical culture, of experimental philosophy, and above all of Christian belief, and he challenges all the forces of anarchy to break the bonds which unite these influences. May we not all in these days learn something from his manliness and his faith? He has had, indeed, his successors in every age, though none perhaps of quite so vigorous, so sound, and so intrepid a nature. But we, like him, are surrounded by the brilliant dawn of what is almost a new experimental philosophy; we, like him, witness the very name of religion disgraced all around us by what he called "furious zeal for and against trivial circumstances," and sometimes by miserable perversions of its truths and ordinances. Like him, we see men recoiling from these scandals and acquiescing in infidelity or scepticism; like him, too, we see the political forces of

Europe in a kind of combustion, and we live in daily dread of a conflagration. Can we do better than follow his example, by concentrating our energies on the essential truths of the Gospel and the plain and obvious duties of morality?

SOUTH,

THE RHETORICIAN.

Peculiar character of the age in which South lived, owing to the various schools of thought which were beginning to show themselves in the Church of England—This character due to the genius of the English Reformation, which had encouraged greater freedom of thought, and greater love of antiquity, than existed in any other of the Reformed Churches—Consequent certainty of a struggle between these opposing elements, which actually took place under Charles I. and Charles II.

Sketch of the life of South—His education at Westminster and at Oxford—His early indications of great ability, and of strong antipathy to the Puritans—Is made Chaplain to Lord Clarendon, and Canon of Christ Church—Spends his life at Oxford as the favourite preacher of the University and the Cavaliers—His support of Lord Arran.

General characteristics of South's ability as a preacher—Compared with Bossuet—Instances of his powers of arrangement and analysis—His defects in religious feeling—Comparison in this respect with Jeremy Taylor—Occasional passages of great beauty.

View of South's character as a politician, which injured his character as a preacher—Evidenced by his absolute devotion to his party, and to the "Divine Right of Kings," and his hatred of the Puritans—Excuses to be found in the narrowness of the Puritan party, but the persecuting spirit displayed against them is still indefensible.

Summary of his excellencies and defects.

THE divine whose character and writings we are to consider to-day, if he can scarcely be called one of the greatest men of the Church of England, was yet

endowed with one remarkable gift which has never been common amongst her writers. He was, perhaps, the most powerful rhetorician, not excepting Jeremy Taylor, whom she has produced; and if we cannot call him her greatest preacher; if time, which has only added to the glory of Bossuet and Massillon, and which allows us still to study even Beveridge and Barrow, has seen South pass into comparative neglect, this is due to no want of natural power in himself, but to the fact that the value of his writings is impaired by so large an alloy of party spirit, and that he gave such full scope to his powers of sarcasm and invective, that it is very difficult to give an adequate idea of his Sermons without quoting passages which modern taste would reject. He lived, indeed, at a time which proverbially tries the tempers of men—at the close of a great revolution, when much judgment and moderation were required to meet the wants of the Church of England; then at the end of the struggles which had marked the first century of her history, and violently agitated both by the remembrance of her sufferings under Cromwell, and by her sudden victory at the Restoration of 1660. Her long conflict might at first sight appear to have been of eminent service to the Church, for it had given birth, both within and without her pale, to a line of eminent men, and a vigour and a variety of thought greater than she had hitherto known. Thus the generous

love of learning—which was perhaps the brightest feature in the character of Archbishop Laud, and which led him to encourage men of ability in schools very different from his own—had already produced Chillingworth, Hales, and Jeremy Taylor; Sanderson was still alive, and Hammond only recently dead; Pearson was at the height of his reputation; South and Bull, and Beveridge and Barrow were already conspicuous; while, not to speak of Baxter and Howe, who had not yet left her pale, a new school of eminent men had arisen, of whom Tillotson, Stillingfleet, and Burnet were the chief active representatives; and who, closely allied with an original class of thinkers at Cambridge, were forming (what had hitherto been scarcely known) a Moderate party in the Church. But this list is itself enough to show us not merely the greatness of the Church of England in those days, but also its difficulties; for it is evident that all the modern elements of thought and contest which exist in our present Church were alive, if they were not yet active, soon after the Restoration, and it would have required no small power in the leading prelates to restrain this extraordinary outburst of theological thought within the limits of a single Church. Without imagining that elements so diverse could have been brought into perfect harmony, we are apt at such periods to long for the presence of a master-mind, and it cannot be said that Sheldon,

Ward, and Sancroft, or even Cosin, were adequate to the emergency. The general tone and temper adopted by South, who was incomparably their greatest preacher, will throw some light on the difficulties and the failures of the Church.

The difficulties, indeed, to which I have alluded, and which must never be forgotten in judging the conduct of the Church of England at this critical period of her existence, were simply due to that cause which has always been both its strength and weakness—the attempt to be, in a true sense, large and national. The very circumstances of its origin have forced it to include within its pale schools of religious thought which no other Church has attempted to unite. Half Catholic and half Protestant under Henry VIII. and Cranmer—Lutheranised under Edward VI., and involved in a bloody struggle by Mary—it was not able to adopt the narrow and one-sided system of Luther or Calvin; and it soon discovered, when it began to take a more definite form under Elizabeth, that the spirit of the old religion was still powerful, and that much of the best religious thought of England retained a strong Catholic impress. The reign of Mary, indeed, had embittered the popular feeling against the Roman Catholics, and they were almost crushed as a party by the ruthless cruelty of Elizabeth; but the Calvinistic party never took their place, and the great 'Ecclesiastical Polity' of Hooker, the earliest and most

lasting work of English theology, confirmed the principal teachers of the English Church in that warm attachment to the Church of the earliest ages of Christianity which was but little known to the other Churches of the Reformation. But the independent spirit of Calvinism, though thus rejected by the greatest of the English clergy, early obtained an influence which was, perhaps, rather political than religious, over many of the ablest men of the English gentry and middle classes; and it was owing to the alliance of the Church party, and especially of Archbishop Laud, with the despotism of James and Charles, that Eliot, Hampden, Pym, Cromwell, in a word, of some of the greatest politicians whom England has ever produced, were mostly Nonconformists. Thus the great Civil War was a struggle between religious as well as political principles; but though for a while Calvinism was triumphant, its very victory was its destruction. The ten years of the reign of the Puritans are perhaps the most convincing evidence that Calvinism, from its narrowness, bitterness, and want of reason, can never either attract the mass, or satisfy the most thoughtful, of our countrymen. When it fell, the old Church of England at once resumed its place; but it was no longer the same as it had been in the days of Andrewes and Laud, for it had all the fresh elements of religious thought and activity, of which I have just spoken, to mould or to struggle with.

It is facts such as these which make the fifty years from the Restoration in 1660 to the beginning of the eighteenth century so marked a period in the history of the Church of England, because it saw that Church assume its final form and enter upon what may be called its modern course. The High Church party, (though the name was not yet known)* the Moderate party, the Latitudinarian party, the Nonconformist party, were now branching in different directions from the two old parties of the Church of the Puritans; and it is certainly no small proof of the large and Catholic character of the Church, that Bull and South, and Pearson and Jeremy Taylor, and Cudworth and Locke, and Boyle and Isaac Newton, were not only able to live as its attached members, but may be numbered amongst its greatest writers. This is a fact which must not be forgotten when we lament the failure of the larger attempts at comprehension which were made in the reigns of Charles II. and William. Meanwhile, it is needless to add that this period was also one of vehement struggle, in which Churchmen, Nonconformists, and Roman Catholics had their alternate triumphs, and which was likely, therefore, to breed a race of vigorous combatants. No writer, in his Sermons

* South in one of his Sermons attacks his opponents for inventing the name of "High Church;" and Fowler, Bishop of Gloucester, ridicules the name of "Latitudinarian," which had been assigned to the divines of Tillotson's school.

especially, throws more light on the fierce contests of the time than the brilliant preacher whom we now proceed to describe.

Robert South, the son of an eminent London merchant, was born in the year 1633; "a period," says one of his biographers, "when the artifices of designing sectaries against the established government in Church and State made it necessary that so bright an assertor of both should arise;" and he was early sent as a boy to Westminster School. Westminster was then the scene of excitements and riots, which remind us more of the earlier outbursts of the French Revolution than of the comparatively moderate course of our own civil war, and South's boyish ears must have often heard the shouts of the mob as they clamoured "Down with the Bishops;" or denounced the Lords who were supposed to be favourable to Strafford as "Straffordians, enemies to their country."* The instincts of the scholars of the "Royal School of Westminster" were not very likely to be on the side of the Puritans; and we shall easily believe one of South's Sermons, preached long afterwards to the School, in which he tells them that in the "very worst of times, when it was his lot to be a member of a school untaintedly loyal, we were *really* King's scholars, as well as called so;" and he adds that on that very day, "that eternally black and infamous

* Clarendon, vol. i. p. 449.

day, of the King's murder, I myself heard the King publicly prayed for" (this was said to have been done by South himself) "but an hour or two at most before his sacred head was struck off."* His great master, Busby, had early detected the remarkable talents of "that sulky boy," South; and he passed in the same election with Locke to Christ Church, where he was known, perhaps too early, as the great scholar and wit of his day; and he soon took an opportunity in some public exercise in Christ Church Hall for indulging, as a Puritan writer expresses it, "in a violent invective against all the most serious professors of godliness." For this, and some similar performances, he was rebuked by Owen, whom Cromwell had placed at the head of Christ Church, as one who "sat in the seat of the scornful;" a rebuke which he soon repaid in his earliest Sermon, on 'The Professors of Godliness, but Workers of Iniquity, with their sad countenances and hypocritical groanings,' which was preached in 1659, during the confusion of the Convention.† The Restoration of

* South adds: "And this loyal genius always continued amongst us, and grew up with us; which made that noted Corypheus of the Independent faction, Dr. John Owen (some time after promoted by Cromwell to the Deanery of Christ Church in Oxford), often say that it would never be well with the nation till this school was suppressed; for that it naturally bred up men to an opposition to the Government. And so far, indeed, he was right."

† South quotes in the notes to this Sermon a fact which Bishop Burnet has described more graphically. "Goodwin, who had pretended to assure them in a

Charles II., which almost immediately followed, gave fuller scope to South's abilities, and though still a very young man (he was scarcely twenty-seven) he was already the great preacher of the University.

He at once seized the occasion of a Commission, sent down immediately on Charles's return to restore Oxford to its pre-Cromwellian state, to preach a powerful Sermon in favour of a learned clergy*—"The Scribe instructed to the Kingdom of Heaven"—in which he mixes several fine descriptions of the character of Scripture oratory with his usual invectives against his opponents. I will venture to quote, thus early, a single passage which will give us an idea of both. "Where," he says, speaking of the eloquence of Scripture, "where do we ever find sorrow flowing in such a naturally prevailing pathos as in the lamentations of Jeremiah? One would think that every letter was wrote with a tear, every word was the noise of a breaking heart; that the author was a man compacted of sorrows; disciplined to

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prayer that Cromwell should not die, which was but a few minutes before he expired, had now the impudence to say to God, 'Thou hast deceived us, and we were deceived.'" Sterry, praying for Richard, used these indecent words, next to blasphemy: "Make him the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person." If such was the general Puritan tone, it goes far to excuse South's sarcasms. (Burnet's 'Own Times,' i. 114.

* It was preached July 29, 1660.

grief from his infancy; one who never breathed but in sighs, nor spoke but in tears and groans. So that he who said he would not read the Scripture for fear of spoiling his style, showed himself as much a blockhead as an atheist, and to have as small a gust of the elegancies of expression as of the sacredness of the matter. . . ." And he adds that, "Questionless when Christ says that a Scribe must be stocked with things new and old, we must not think that he meant that he should have a hoard of old sermons (whosoever made them), with a bundle of new opinions; for this certainly would have furnished out such entertainment to his spiritual guests, as no rightly-disposed palate could ever relish."*

It is probable that the applause from the Cavaliers, which greeted these earliest outbursts of their long pent-up indignation, was of real injury to South's abilities and character, by making him their favourite party preacher. He was quickly rewarded by being chosen Public Orator in 1660, when he was only in his twenty-eighth year; congratulated Clarendon on his inauguration as Chancellor in a brilliant speech; was made one of his Chaplains, and appointed to preach before the King at Whitehall. It was during this Sermon that the Puritans declared that whilst denouncing the great Rebellion he was seized with such qualms of conscience that he was obliged to

* iii. 22, 24.

leave the pulpit; but the feeling must have been a very transitory one, for we may safely say that almost every public discourse is deformed by descriptions either of Oliver Cromwell as "the Great Master of Misrule," or of "the blind adder" Milton, or by vehement onslaughts on the Puritans and Nonconformists. He was soon afterwards appointed a Prebendary of Westminster, as well as Canon of Christ Church, and the rest of his long life was passed between Westminster and Oxford. He never obtained, nor does it appear that he sought for, any higher or more active preferment in the Church. In Oxford a succession of great Deans—Fell, Aldrich, and Atterbury, to say nothing of Canons like Pococke, and students like Locke—had made Christ Church the centre of the talent of the University, which, according to the impartial testimony of Burnet, was now distinguishing itself as a place of real learning, particularly in the Eastern languages and in the Fathers, though the number of students was small, and too much in accordance with the character of the Court, which often resorted there. South was the great University preacher, and his subsequent career might be easily tracked by his Sermons.* He,

* His only prolonged absence from his work seems to have been in 1674, when he accompanied Lawrence Hyde, afterwards Lord Rochester, who was sent as Ambassador to Poland to congratulate the great John Sobieski on his accession. He has left a very curious sketch of Poland, addressed to his warmest Oxford friend, Pococke.

no doubt, supported Dr. Jane, the active but pliant Professor of Divinity, in the famous decree of Passive Obedience which passed Convocation on the day of the execution of Lord Russell, against "certain damnable doctrines, destructive of the sacred persons of Princes," and we may be sure that all the bitterest Acts of Parliament against the Dissenters—the two Acts of Uniformity, the Conventicle Act, the Five Mile Act, which drove 2000 clergy out of the Church of England and imprisoned Baxter and Bunyan—received his hearty approbation. He even carried his hatred of novelties so far, that, in the true old style of Oxford, he denounced the newly-formed Royal Society, of which the eminent Bishop Ward of Salisbury was the second President, in a speech, as Public Orator. It would be very curious if we could ascertain what were his relations with his old schoolfellow Locke, at Christ Church, in whose expulsion he must have borne a part. He declared himself ready to put on a buff coat against Monmouth; and would take no part whatever against James II., though he did not become a Nonjuror. But he, of course, opposed every act of toleration or comprehension during the reign of William, and was a warm supporter of Sacheverell in 1670; and one of his last acts was an hearty adhesion to Lord Arran (whose brother, the Duke of Ormond, had been just before impeached for high treason), who was elected by the Chapter to the High Stewardship of Westminster

—an office still in their gift—with the words, "Heart and hand for my Lord Arran." He died at the age of eighty-three, in 1716.

South has made the following assertion in one of his Sermons. "I look," he says, "upon the old Church of England Royalist (which I take to be only another name for a man who prefers his conscience before his interest) to be the best Christian, and the most meritorious subject in the world;" and certainly our first impression of his character and powers from the above outline would be that he was, above all, the preacher of the triumphant Cavaliers, the cardinal article of whose faith was the Divine right of Kings, and who, in the full sense of the term, had "given up to party" talents which were "meant for mankind." But this, though in some respects true, would give a very inadequate idea of the power of sermons which may be profitably studied even now, for South was of the true blood of the great orators—of Demosthenes and Burke, as much as of Bossuet and Massillon. No doubt he allowed both his passion and his wit to overrun, and thus often to spoil, his style and his thoughts; but if we can put this great defect out of sight, he has almost every gift which marks the orator—powers equally great of thought and expression; a nervous and manly style, full, but never overcharged with learning, and an admirable arrangement. Burnet, whose remarks on the preaching of the day

in his 'Pastoral Care' are most valuable, speaks slightingly of the English preachers before the Restoration, but adds that since that time they had greatly improved by studying the French; and it was probably his dislike to South, whom he calls a "learned, but ill-natured divine," which prevents him from mentioning him when he is describing Tillotson (strangely enough to our modern taste) as the best preacher of his time. John Wesley, no bad judge of the requisites for a preacher, places "the manly sense of Dr. South" far above the talents, which he much under-estimates, of the French preachers. The preacher, indeed, with whom South might be most naturally compared is Bossuet; and though he is very inferior to that greatest master of sacred oratory in dignity of style, and in that high tone of religious earnestness which is Bossuet's crowning excellence, he perhaps surpasses him in the terse vigour of his language, and his lively, if not always decorous, illustrations. Let me try to establish some of these statements by a closer examination of South's power as a preacher.

First, South was a master both of arrangement and analysis, without which neither written nor spoken oratory are often efficient; and we may often trace in his clear divisions the effects of a close study of the Rhetoric and Ethics of Aristotle. One of his greatest Sermons, on "The Creation of Man in the Image of God," is a good example of this. Perhaps, indeed, we

might hesitate in this critical age to invest the first man with all the powers of philosophy, and to say that "An Aristotle was but the rubbish of an Adam, and Athens but the rudiments of Paradise." But this doubtful view does not affect either the clear analysis or the animated description which South gives of the powers of the human mind in its ideal state of perfection. The main thought is very simple. The image of God consists in the perfection of the whole man divided under the three heads of the Understanding, the Will, and the Passions, and he vividly describes them all. It is difficult to give any idea of his power without a few extracts. "First," he says, "take man's noblest faculty, the Understanding. It was then sublime, clear, aspiring, and, as it were, the soul's upper region, lofty and serene, free from the vapours and disturbances of the lower affections. It was the leading, controlling faculty. All the passions wore the colours of reason. It did not so much persuade as command. It was not Consul but Dictator. Discourse was then almost as quick as intuition. It was nimble in proposing, firm in concluding. It could sooner determine than now it can dispute. Like the sun, it had both light and agility; it knew no rest but in motion, no quiet but in activity. . . . It arbitrated upon all the reports of Sense, and all the varieties of Imagination, not, like a drowsy judge, only hearing, but also directing their verdict."

Or let us take again the following example of his power of analysing the passions. "The grand leading affection of all," he tells us, "is Love. This is the great instrument and engine of nature, the bond and cement of society, the spring and spirit of the universe. Love is such an affection as cannot so properly be said to be in the soul, as the soul to be in that. It is the whole man wrapt up into one desire; all the powers, vigour, and faculty of the soul abridged into one inclination; and it is of that active, restless nature, that it must of necessity exert itself, so that it will fasten upon any inferior, unsuitable object, rather than upon none at all. The soul may sooner leave off to subsist than to love; and, like the vine, it withers and dies if it has nothing to embrace. Now this affection, in its state of innocence, was happily pitched upon its right object; it flamed up in direct fervour of emotion to God and of charity to its neighbour. . . . It was a vestal, and a virgin fire; and differed as much from that which usually passes by its name nowadays, as the vital heat from the burning of a fever."

I have ventured to quote these passages at full length, because in the case of a great preacher it is absolutely necessary to allow him occasionally to speak for himself; and even these extracts may be enough to show that scarcely any gift of the orator was wanting to South, except, indeed, that

which gives the finish to all oratory, the genuine enthusiasm which inspires the strongest appeals of passionate feeling. This, the great power of the highest preachers, is almost a necessity for the religious orator, and it was the want of this in South which left him the great rhetorician, and made him fall short of the true orator. In this respect he is certainly far inferior to Jeremy Taylor, though I venture to think that Mr. Coleridge was forgetting for a moment the essential distinction between writing and speaking, when he calls Taylor "the most eloquent of *divines;*" and adds, "had I said of *men,* Cicero would forgive me, and Demosthenes nod assent."* We do not believe that writings so diffuse and luxuriant as those of Taylor ever achieved the great object of the orator, persuasion; and this feeling is well expressed in a powerful passage of South, who, if we may judge from some of the expressions, seems to have been distinctly alluding to his great contemporary. "'I speak the words of soberness,' says St. Paul, 'and I preach the Gospel, not with enticing words of man's wisdom.' This was the way of the Apostles, discoursing of things sacred. Nothing here of the fringes of the North Star; nothing of 'nature's becoming unnatural;' nothing of 'the down of angel's wings, or the beautiful locks of cherubims;' no starched similitudes, introduced

* 'Aids to Reflection,' p. 249.

with a 'thus have I seen a cloud rolling in its airy mansion.' No; these were sublimities above the rise of the Apostolic spirit, for the Apostles, poor mortals! were content to take lower steps . . . and to use a dialect which only pierced the conscience, and made the hearers cry out, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' It tickled not the ear, but sunk into the heart; and when men came from such sermons, they never commended the preacher for his taking voice or gesture; for the fineness of such a simile, or the quaintness of such a sentence; but they spoke like men conquered by the overpowering force and evidence of the most concerning truths, much in the words of the two disciples going to Emmaus, 'Did not our hearts burn within us while He opened to us the Scriptures?'"* Passages like this show us at once the strength and the weakness of South, and deepen our regret that so great a master of "manly sense" should not also have been the greatest religious teacher amongst our preachers. We have already intimated the causes which made South fall short of this great position, and which would lead us rather to turn for the expression of true devotional feeling to Jeremy Taylor or Barrow, or Beveridge or Baxter. It is, however, only just to South to say that in Sermons which naturally called for high feeling, he could speak like a man "con-

* iv. 152.

quered," to use his own words, "by the force of overpowering truth," as in the following description of our Saviour's sufferings. "This," he says, "was our Saviour's condition. There was a sword which reached his very spirit, and pierced his soul, till it bled through his body; for they were the struggles and agonies of the inward man, the labours and stirrings of his restless thoughts, which cast his body into that prodigious sweat. It was the spirit that took the pains. It was that which was then treading the winepress of God's wrath alone, till it made him red in his apparel, and dyed all his garments with blood. What thought can reach, or tongue express, what our Saviour then felt within His own breast! The image of all the sins of the world, for which He was to suffer, then appeared clear and lively, and express to His mind. He saw how much the honour of the great God was abused by them, and how many millions of poor souls they must have inevitably cast under the pressure of a wrath infinite and intolerable, should he not have turned the blow upon himself. The horror of which then filled and amazed his vast apprehensive soul, and those apprehensions could not but affect his tender heart, then brimful of the highest zeal for God's glory, and the most relenting compassion for the souls of men, till it fermented and boiled over with transport and agony, and even forced its way through all his body, in those strange ebullitions of blood, not to be

paralleled by the sufferings of any person recorded in any history whatsoever."*

It will be obvious both from the above extracts, and from the general description which has already been given of South, that he comes before us in a double character, and that his preaching was too largely the reflection of his politics. His political violence was in fact equally injurious to his character, his judgment, and his eloquence. Thus we might at first have expected that a man endowed with a power of sarcasm equal to Juvenal would, at least, have made his lash thoroughly felt by the vices of the most immoral period of English history, and that he would not have spared the Court, which was the centre of them all. He was, indeed, to all appearance a high-principled, and certainly he was an outspoken man, and there are no doubt several occasions where he vigorously denounces the vices of the day, as when he says that "all possible courtship is now thought too little to be used towards persons infamous and odious, and fit to be visited by none but God Himself, who visits after a very different manner from the courtiers of the world." But, speaking generally, it must be allowed that South's hatred of vice is a far less prominent feature in his preaching than his hatred of Nonconformity;

* iii. 85.

for his predominant passions were an absolute devotion to the Court, or at least to the King, and an intense horror of what he called the "Holderforths" among the Puritans; and it is curious, and at the same time painful, to observe the extent to which those feelings absorbed and warped the moral sense of an otherwise upright and manly judgment. I am not, indeed, sure that, under any circumstances, South would have been prepared to play the part of John the Baptist, or to imitate the example of Ken, in rebuking the vices of Charles II. But although his intense veneration not only for the office but for the person of the King undoubtedly made him a less severe censor of the morals of the time than he would otherwise have been, it would be unjust to attribute his conduct to adulation. The devotion of the English clergy and gentry even to the worst of the Stuart Princes is due to a far better cause. The death of King Charles I., as the contemporary evidence of Bishop Burnet assures us, "and his serious and unsuspicious deportment in it, had made all his former errors entirely forgot, and drew a lasting hatred on the actors;"* and this may, in a measure, account for the extravagant form in which the "Divine Right of Kings," a doctrine almost unknown to English history till the days of the Stuarts, was held by so many eminent divines, till it

* Burnet's 'Own Times,' i. 69.

was rudely destroyed by the Revolution of 1688. South was not very likely to be guarded in his language in speaking of what he calls "the blackest act which the sun ever saw since he hid his face at the Crucifixion," and of which he says that "to drop the blackest ink and the bitterest gall upon such an act is not satire, but propriety." Accordingly, in one of his Sermons preached before the King, which is perhaps the most extraordinary combination of eulogy and invective ever published, we find him asserting not only that "Kings are endowed by God with sagacity and quickness of understanding above other men," and that God disposes their hearts to such virtuous and pious courses, as He has promised a blessing to;"* but he is so transported in his eulogies of Charles I., as to sum them up by declaring that "he was a father to his country, if but for this only that he was the father to such a son."

It is needless to add, and it would be painful fully to exhibit, the extent of South's animosity to the Puritan party. We are not their apologists. In many respects they may be regarded, their own writers being the judges, as almost the most narrow, bitter, and disagreeable sect which sprang from the Reformation. Neither can we regard the failure of the Savoy Conference, the last attempt to retain the bulk of the Puritans within the Church of England,

* ii. 566.

as so unmixed an evil as liberal historians have described it; for it may well be doubted whether the attempt to combine minds so different as those of Baxter and Cosin, the stiff Presbyterian and the strict Anglo-Catholic, could have been permanently successful. The Puritan party was, indeed, still very much the same that it was in its conflict with Hooker. There was the same stickling for small objects, the rejection of the Cross at Baptism and of the Surplice, the same antipathy to introducing any beauty or art into the worship of God, and the same objection to those great principles of Church government which Hooker had so eloquently asserted. The tendency would have been, as the other leaders of the Church party, like Cosin and Sanderson, probably saw, to form a schism within the Church instead of without; or, as South expressed it, "By yielding or giving place to them, a pernicious and incurable schism would have been brought into the Church."* Unquestionably there were to be found among the Puritans men of eminent goodness and toleration like Baxter. Nor need we hesitate to admire the courageous zeal even of the fiery zealots of Cromwell's army, or the evident piety of most of their greatest writers. Yet even Baxter, judging by his own account and that of his friends, was one of the most impracticable of men;

* iv. 198.

and as he described the Book of Common Prayer as "a dose of opium, likely to cure diseases by extinguishing life," he may be believed when he himself says, "that the world will see that we differ in greater things than ceremonies and forms of prayer."* We cannot, therefore, but regard the attempt to widen the Church of England in a Presbyterian direction, which was made at the Savoy Conference in 1662, as a matter of doubtful policy, which the Church party may have well been wise in resisting. But the persecution of the Puritans which followed was a very different matter. The Act of Uniformity, the Conventicle Act, and the Five Mile Act, are quite as odious in principle as the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes; they were forced upon a reluctant King, who had pledged his word to the Presbyterians that he would secure for them freedom of worship; and the last and most cruel was passed at the very time when the Nonconformists had rendered eminent service during the Plague in London by preaching in the "empty pulpits," deserted, in too many instances, by their own clergy.† The tone adopted by South was a direct instigation to measures of this kind, and was probably prompted by their authors, Archbishop Sheldon and Bishop Ward. It would

* Baxter's 'Life,' 213, 320, 325.

† Burnet, i. 314. He adds, indeed: "They began to preach openly, not without reflecting on the sins of the Court, and on the ill-usage that they themselves had met with. This was represented very odiously at Oxford."

be easy to quote many passages full of his caustic wit on this subject; but I shall only give one short extract from a Sermon preached in 1871, when the contest with the Nonconformists was still raging. Their tenderness "of conscience," says South, "is such an one as makes men scruple at the lawfulness of a set form of worship, at the use of some solemn rites and ceremonies in the worship of God, but makes them not stick at all at sacrilege, nor at rebellion, nor at the murder of their King, nor at the robbery and undoing of their fellow-subjects; villainies which not only Christianity proscribes, but the common reason of mankind rises up against, and by the very light of nature condemns. And did not those among us who plead tenderness of conscience do all these things? Nay, did they not do them in the very strength of this plea?"*

It is painful to quote invectives which nothing can justify, yet it may be said, as a final excuse for South, that this feeling was, for a time at least, that of the whole nation, of the laity quite as much as the clergy. Clarendon and Southampton, Charles's best ministers, shared it. The Puritan party was, in fact, now suffering the penalty of ten years of tyranny, when, in the words of a historian nowise unfavourable to them, "they had forbidden, under heavy penalties, the use of the Book of Common

* ii. 376.

Prayer; not only in churches but even in private houses; when it had been a crime in a child to read by the bedside of a sick parent one of those beautiful Collects which had soothed the griefs of forty generations of Christians; when clergymen of respectable character were not only ejected from their benefices by thousands, but were frequently exposed to the outrages of a fanatical rabble:"* when so much that was beautiful in Churches and Cathedrals had been ruthlessly defaced, and almost everything which reminded men that Christ's religion had been dear to their forefathers for sixteen centuries was deemed on that very account unholy. If we are inclined to judge South, and even prelates like Cosin, with severity, we must remember that their language often only expresses the indignation which even religious men will feel against a tyrannous attempt to injure Christianity by limiting it to the teaching of a narrow and intolerant sect.

In the above remarks on the writings of this eminent man, I may possibly appear to have dwelt too much on the defective side of his character. But the palm of sacred oratory is not to be won even by the highest intellectual gifts alone; and while I have gladly recognised the natural genius of South as an Orator, I have felt that it is equally important to exhibit the causes of his failure to attain the

* Macaulay's 'History of England,' i. 161.

highest rank as a Preacher. I have endeavoured, in a word, to describe South's sermons justly; both as they show the power of the man and the character of his times—which influenced him, in some respects, so unfortunately. He was, perhaps, born with too keen and caustic a wit, and he indulged it too unsparingly, ever to have been either a great man or a great preacher; for wit like his tends to make men contemptuous of their fellows, and is seldom consistent with that generous enthusiasm which is essential to true eloquence. But his natural powers, both of thought and expression, though they were often unwisely exercised, were as great as could be found in any preacher, either ancient or modern. And if we acknowledge with regret that in the gentler, sweeter, and tenderer feelings, which are the crowning glory of the Christian preacher, South was deficient, we may still believe that writings marked by such powers of thought and expression, so rich in learning, in wit, and in illustration, and with so much of moral and religious wisdom, can never fail to be an instructive and often an elevating study.

BEVERIDGE,

THE SCRIPTURAL PREACHER.

"Thy testimonies are my delight, and my counsellors."
Psalm cxix. 24.

The importance and significance of preaching—General characteristics of Beveridge as a theologian and preacher—Scriptural and Catholic—Opposed to Romanism and Puritanism—His history—Great Rebellion—Life at Cambridge—Restoration—First writings—Vicar of Ealing—Rector of S. Peter's, Cornhill—Great work of his life—His practical piety—His strong Churchmanship—The Revolution—Refuses Bath and Wells—Bishop of S. Asaph—His will—His position as a preacher.

"We live in an age, and among a people that place a great part, if not the whole of their religion in hearing sermons." These are the words with which Bishop Beveridge commences a discourse on the "Ministers of the Gospel, Christ's Ambassadors;"* and he goes on to complain that "we find but few that are ever the more religious for all they hear;" a complaint which is very familiar to us in every age of the Church.

It is quite possible to exaggerate the importance of sermons, and it may be conceded that the mere

* Serm. XI., 'Works' (Angl. Cath. Libr.), vol. i. p. 195.

amount of preaching or of hearing will form a very uncertain measure of the depth and extent of religious life among a people. Yet no one can deny that a revival of religion has always been accompanied by an increased interest in the ordinance of preaching; and it would be difficult to suggest a better means of ascertaining the prevailing religious sentiments of an age, than a complete and careful study of the sermons, which, as a matter of fact, were listened to by the Christian congregations of that age. The preacher is made by his age, and he in his turn helps to make it. In proportion to his influence, he is both representative of the spirit and modes of thought of the generation to which he belongs, and a power by which that spirit and those thoughts are moulded.

It is, however, a much easier task to ascertain the doctrinal position, or even the historical influence of the preachers of past times, than to estimate their oratorical powers, or the secret of their influence in the pulpit. Oratory is not a mere matter of words, of phrases, of arguments, of method; it is, in its highest forms, the outgoing of the life—intellectual, moral, spiritual—of the preacher, upon the life and soul of his hearers. It is conveyed as much by tone, manner, gesture, as by language; and even when we read the words which have moved multitudes to the very depth of their being, a few hours after they have been delivered, we are often unable to under-

stand the secret of their power; how much more when the circumstances in which they were spoken are forgotten, or removed into a distant past, and we are no longer under the influence of the ideas and habits to which they appealed!

There is, perhaps, a peculiar difficulty in studying a preacher like Beveridge, who was but little connected with the more stirring events of his times; and who presents few of those striking peculiarities by which some preachers, in no other respect superior to himself, have been distinguished. Yet this obvious difficulty is undoubtedly counterbalanced by the advantage that he deals, for the most part, with subjects which are of abiding and eternal interest. In this respect, as in so many others, his sermons are like the Book which he delighted to study, speaking to us of human sinfulness and weakness, of Divine mercy and grace, of the life of God in the soul of man, of the means of grace and the hope of glory. Like the Psalms of David, they are full of words which, if they are hoary with age, are also fresh with the bloom of everlasting youth, which awaken an echo as true in the hearts of the servants of God in our own times, as in the days long gone by in which they were first uttered.

We shall, perhaps, best understand the work of Bishop Beveridge, if we first consider his general characteristics as a preacher and a divine, and then note briefly how the man and the preacher was

made, and finally endeavour to set forth some of the most prominent features of his method and manner as a teacher.

We have called Beveridge the "Scriptural Preacher." The very designation is an evidence of the difficulty of affixing any special characteristic to his genius. Yet it would not be easy to find another word which would be so truly and exactly descriptive, and it would be equally difficult, I fancy, to find another preacher to whom the title could be so justly applied.

It is not merely that there are few preachers of any age who make such copious use of Holy Scripture in their sermons, although this is true. It would not be just to say that he strings together texts from Scripture to supply the place of thought and matter of his own. It would be still less true to say that he drags in the words of the sacred writers without relevancy to the subject which he has in hand, or the point which he is seeking to establish. There are pulpit orators who are scriptural preachers in this bad sense of the words. It is not so with Beveridge. You hardly ever find a text misapplied, or which is not to the point. You hardly ever find a meaning forced out of the sacred Word to suit the purpose for which he employs it. Beveridge was a scriptural preacher because his own spirit was bathed in the spirit of the Word of God. He loved the Bible: God's testimonies were indeed his delight

and his counsellors. He spoke in scriptural language, because he thought in it, felt in it, lived in it, worked in it, prayed in it.

Nor was he one of those—and they abound in all ages—who make the claim to be a true interpreter of Holy Scripture a means of promulgating their own private opinions, and often their own departures from Catholic truth. He would put no man or church between him and the Bible; he would hold direct converse with the Spirit of God through His appointed oracles; but he also watched jealously over his own conclusions, and verified them by primitive testimony and Catholic consent.

"The Scriptures," he says, "as being indited by the Spirit of God, do contain the best and soundest words that possibly could be invented, whereby to express such truths as are necessary for mankind to believe or know." Yet, he points out that "there never was any error, heresy, or schism in the Church, but was pretended by the authors and abettors of it to be grounded upon Scripture." And this result, he says, has followed partly from their being ignorant of the original languages in which the Scriptures were written, partly from their being unacquainted with "the rites and customs of the Jewish Church," partly from the mysterious nature of the doctrines contained in the Scriptures, and partly from the moral and spiritual dispositions of those who have studied the Bible. "Such," he says, "is the weak-

ness of men's understandings, such the corruption of their judgments, such the perverseness of their wills, the disorder of their affections, and the pravity of their whole souls, that they extract poison from that which was intended for their food, draw error out of truth, heresy out of the Scriptures themselves, so as to learn to blaspheme God in His own words. But what, then, shall we do in this case? How can we be ever certain that the words we use in matters of religion be sound, and, by consequence, our opinions orthodox, and our sentiments of God and those eternal truths which He hath revealed to us, such as He Himself would have them? Why, surely for this end it is necessary that we indulge not our own fancies, nor idolise our own private opinions, but 'hold fast the form of sound words' delivered to us in the Holy Scriptures, in that sense which the Catholic Church in all ages hath put upon them." *

In these words we have the key to Beveridge's whole position, as a student of Holy Scripture, as a theologian, as a Churchman. How he was fashioned by circumstances, by the grace of God, by his own earnest labours, to be the man he was, we shall presently see. It is at this point important to note that he was, in his convictions, in his teaching, in his life and work, thoroughly consistent from beginning to end. His devotion to the English Church, his

* Serm. VI., "Form of Sound Words," 'Works,' vol. i. p 111 *sq.*

labours as a parish priest, his resolute antagonism to Romanism on the one hand and to Puritanism on the other, are all explained by his views of the method of ascertaining the nature of Divine truth. Thus, speaking of the Church of England, he says:—"For our Church, as to its doctrine as well as discipline, is settled upon so firm a basis, so truly Catholic, that none can oppose what she teacheth, without denying, not only the Scriptures, but the Scriptures as interpreted by the Universal Church. So that we may justly challenge all the world to show us any one point or article of faith wherein our Church differs from the Catholic in all ages, since the Apostles' days, which, I think, is more than can be said of any other national Church in the whole world, there being no other, that I know of, which keeps to the form of sound words delivered in Scripture, as interpreted by the Universal Church, so firmly and constantly as ours doth."*

Hence his opinion of the Roman Communion:—"The Church of Rome hath of late degenerated so far from the doctrine and practice of the Primitive and Universal Church, that they who live in her communion, do commonly perform the same acts of religious worship to creatures which they do to the great Creator of the world, 'God blessed for ever.' This we justly condemn them for, as judging

* Serm. VI., "Form of Sound Words."

it one of the greatest sins that a Church or person can be guilty of. But in the midst of this our just zeal against the Papists for giving as much worship to creatures as they do to the Creator, we must have a care of falling into the other extreme, even of giving no more worship to our Creator than what may be given to a creature; which is the great fault of too many among us.*

Equally clear were his utterances against Puritanism. "And as for schism, they certainly hazard their salvation at a strange rate, who separate themselves from such a Church as ours is, wherein the Apostolical succession, the root of all Christian communion, hath been so entirely preserved, and the Word and Sacraments are so effectively administered. . . . And therefore, to speak modestly, they must needs run a very great hazard who cut themselves off from ours, and by consequence from the Catholic Church, and so render themselves incapable of receiving any benefit from this promise, or from the means of grace which they do or may enjoy." And yet he was no formalist, for he goes on: "But when I speak of your continuing firm and faithful to our Church, I do not mean that you should only talk high for her, much less inveigh against her adversaries, or damn all those who are not of her communion; for this is contrary to the Divine and

* Serm. V., "On the True Notion of Religious Worship," vol. i. p. 88.

Apostolic spirit that is in her, which is a spirit of meekness, and soberness, and charity. But my meaning is that you firmly believe whatsoever she, from the Word of God, propounds as an article of faith, and faithfully perform whatever she, from the same Word, requires as a necessary duty to God or man. . . . And oh! that all we who are here present, and all that profess to be of our Church, wheresoever they are, would for the future do so! What an holy, what a happy people we should then be! How pious towards God, how loyal to our Sovereign, how just and charitable towards all men! . . . Then our Lord Himself would delight to dwell amongst us, and be always present with us, not only by His spirit, but likewise by His power too. And if He be with us, we need not fear what flesh can do against us." *

We have thus learned to understand the theological position of Beveridge. Before we attempt more fully to comprehend the preacher, we must try to make acquaintance with the man; for we must remember, —and it is a solemn truth for priests and people,— it is the man who preaches, it is the inner life of the speaker that comes forth in his words, and determines their value and their power, or their unreality and their weakness.

The recorded incidents of Beveridge's life are few, and they are not striking. He was born early in the

* Serm. I., "Christ's Presence with His Ministers," vol. i. p. 23.

year 1636 (N.S. 1637),* in the parish of Barrow-upon-Soar, in Leicestershire, of which parish his father was vicar. The troubles which led to the Civil War and to the Commonwealth were in full progress. In the year of his birth, Laud's Liturgy was introduced into Scotland. In the following year Hampden was condemned for his refusal to pay the ship-money. He was a boy of twelve when the King's head fell on the block at Whitehall. His father had died, and another of the same name, perhaps an uncle, had been deprived by the sequestrators. In the year 1653 he entered S. John's College, Cambridge, the same year, and within a month of the time when Cromwell dissolved the Long Parliament. We can imagine the thoughts which were moving in the mind of the young Churchman when he became a member of the University. Here the influences under which he was placed were all opposed to the teachings of his childhood. Dr. Tuckney, the master of his College, was a distinguished Puritan and Calvinist; he was one of the Presbyterian divines at the Savoy Conference, after the Restoration. Beveridge was not contented to abandon his hereditary faith, nor was he satisfied to hold it with mere unreasoning constancy. He addicted himself with devotion and

* The Oxford Editor has 1638. Through the kindness of the present Vicar of Barrow, the Rev. W. Newham, I have been able to verify the date. The birthday is unknown; Beveridge was baptized Feb. 21st.

success to the study of oriental languages, of Holy Scripture, of the early records of the History of the Church. Before he was twenty he had written a grammar of the Syriac language. The fruits of his patristic and ecclesiastical studies were afterwards given to the world in his works on the Apostolical Canons and the decrees of the early Councils.* These works have indeed been in great measure superseded; but they contributed in no slight degree to advance those deeply interesting and important studies, and they are still quoted with respect by the most recent labourers in the same field. Beveridge felt in his day, as we feel now, that if the position of the Church of England is unassailable, it is because she stands firm upon Holy Scripture, primitive testimony, Catholic consent. It is this conviction which makes his utterances so clear, decided, unwavering. He was not only convinced, but he knew well the grounds on which his convictions were based.

But he was not a mere scholar and theologian; he was a devout Christian, and all his studies were conducted to the end that he might more perfectly know the will of God, in order that he might acquaint himself with Him, love Him, and serve Him. His 'Private Thoughts,' written for his own use early in

* The 'Pandectæ' appeared in 1672; the 'Codex Canonum' in 1679. It is a curious illustration of the influence of these books, that, as the Dean of Westminster informed me, Beveridge was the only English divine who was known to Philaret, Archbishop of Moscow.

life, although not published until after his death, are an abiding testimony to the reality, the depth, the warmth of his devotion. Thus prepared in heart and mind, he had attained to the age of twenty-three at the time of the Restoration, and was in the following year (1661) ordained deacon and priest, and instituted to the Vicarage of Ealing.

Eleven years afterwards, in 1672, he was appointed rector of S. Peter's, Cornhill, in which office he spent the best part of his life, a period of no less than thirty years. It was here, therefore, that the great work of his life was done; and it is in this work that we naturally look for an illustration of those principles of which he was the consistent advocate. Nor do we look in vain.

At the very beginning of his ministry he set before his new parishioners that which was the constant theme of his teaching, "holiness the great end of the Christian dispensation;" and he showed them that, however ardent his Churchmanship, however staunch his orthodoxy, no result but this could satisfy him, that they should be a pattern to others for piety and true holiness. "How happy should I think myself," he exclaims, "if it would please God to make me, the unworthiest of His servants, an instrument in His almighty hand towards the effecting of it in this place!"

Beveridge had formed to himself a distinct and lofty ideal of the Christian life which he would cul-

tivate in himself, and which he strove to produce in others. It was, to use his own expression, "the exemplary holiness of the primitive Christians," that he proposed to his people as their model; and he taught them that such a character could be attained only by the use of those means which the primitive Christians employed. For this reason he always laid great stress upon regular, devout, and frequent attendance at the table of the Lord. On this subject his admonitions are earnest and repeated. Thus, speaking of the Holy Communion, he says: "This sacrament supplies the defect of all the Levitical sacrifices, the paschal lamb, the sin-offerings, the trespass-offerings, the peace-offerings, the thank-offerings, the whole burnt-offerings, they are all now laid aside, and this one substituted in their place, of more power and efficacy to the ends for which they were ordained than all they put together; for they only foreshowed Christ's death until it happened, this shows it forth to the end of the world; for, as the Apostle saith, 'As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.'" . . .

"It is true," he goes on, "He hath prescribed no set times for it, as he did for the sacrifices under the law; yet, however, seeing it comes in their place, it ought to bear some proportion with them in this respect, at least so far, that as they, besides their daily, had their weekly sacrifices more than ordinary upon the Sabbath-day; so we should celebrate this Holy

Sacrament once a week upon the Lord's Day, as we find the Apostles did. . . .

"Especially considering the mighty benefits and advantages that accrue to us by a due and worthy receiving of this Holy Sacrament. Hereby we are put in mind of the sinfulness of sin, and the dreadful punishments which are due unto it, seeing nothing less than the blood of the Son of God could expiate it. Hereby our minds are set against it, and our whole souls are taught to abhor and loathe it. Hereby we exercise our faith in Christ, for the pardon of all our faults, and have them accordingly pardoned to us; hereby we wash ourselves over again, as it were, in the blood of the Lamb of God, which cleanseth us from all sin; hereby we derive power and virtue from Christ, to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil; and to serve God with a perfect heart and a willing mind; hereby we dwell in Christ and Christ in us."*

In another Sermon,† speaking on the same subject, he exclaims: "Blessed be God for it, you have the same opportunity as they had of receiving the Holy Sacrament every Lord's Day, and therefore be advised to follow their example, in being constantly at it, or at least as often as you possibly can; do not let every little trifling worldly business deprive you

* Serm. LIV., "Universal Obedience," vol. iii. p. 46.

† Serm. LI., "Steadfastness to the Established Church," vol. ii. p. 440.

of the greatest blessing you can have on this side heaven."

From one of his most remarkable sermons, that on "the exemplary holiness of the primitive Christians,"* as well as from contemporary testimony, we learn that these exhortations had not been in vain. "In the place," he says, "where I had the honour to serve God at His altar, before He called me hither, I administered it every Lord's Day for above twenty years together, and was so far from ever wanting communicants, that I had always as many as I and two curates could well administer it to them; for people found such extraordinary benefit and ghostly comfort from it, that they never thought they could receive it often enough; and the oftener they received it the more they still desired it."

The effect of his teaching, his example, his labours, among the people of his parish, soon became conspicuous. "He applied himself," it is said, "with the utmost labour and zeal to the discharge of his ministry in its several parts and offices; and so instructive was he in his discourse, from the pulpit, so warm and affectionate in his private exhortations, so regular and uniform in the public worship of the Church, and in every part of his pastoral functions, and so remarkably were his labours crowned with success, that as he himself was justly styled the 'great

* Serm. CII. vol. iv. p. 448.

reviver and restorer of primitive piety,' so his parish was deservedly proposed as the best model and pattern for the rest of its neighbours to copy after." *

While Rector of S. Peter's, he was made successively Prebendary of S. Paul's (1674), Archdeacon of Colchester (1681), and Prebendary of Canterbury (1684). The same zeal which he showed in his parish he carried into the work of his Archdeaconry. Doubtful, and reasonably doubtful, of the accuracy of Churchwardens' reports, he visited in person every parish in his district, taking an exact account of its condition and necessities.

When at Canterbury he gave a remarkable example of his somewhat severe Churchmanship. King James II. had ordered a brief to be read for the relief of the persecuted French Protestants. Whether because of his imperfect sympathy with the object of the appeal, or because he really doubted of the legality of such a notice, Beveridge objected that it was not sanctioned by the rubrics. It was on this occasion that Tillotson, who was then Dean of Canterbury, addressed to him the well-known taunt, "Doctor, doctor, Charity is above rubrics!"

It is not unlikely, however, that he was beginning to see that King James's new-born zeal for toleration was used only as a means of restoring the papal

* 'Biographia Britannica,' and preface to his (posthumously published) 'Private Thoughts.'

power in England. We know, at least, that he was about this time the member of a society which met in private for consultation on this subject, and for prayer that such an evil might be averted.

At the revolution, he did not hesitate to take the oath of allegiance to William and Mary, and was shortly afterwards (1690) made one of the King's chaplains. He was also a prominent member of Convocation, and took an active part in the debates on the subject of the concessions which were proposed to be made for the reconciliation of the Puritans. Beveridge was not unwilling to meet the party with which he had little personal or ecclesiastical sympathy; but he strenuously opposed any surrender of what he regarded as principle. Before the Convocation of 1689 he "preached a Latin Sermon,* in which he warmly eulogised the existing system, and yet declared himself favourable to a moderate reform. Ecclesiastical laws, he said, were of two kinds. Some laws were fundamental and eternal; they derived their authority from God; nor could any religious community abrogate them without ceasing to form a part of the universal Church. Other laws were local and temporary. They had been framed by human wisdom, and might be altered by human wisdom. They ought not, indeed, to be altered without grave reasons. But surely, at that moment, such reasons were not wanting.

* This summary is from Lord Macaulay's 'History,' chap. xiv.

To unite a scattered flock in one fold under one shepherd, to remove stumbling-blocks from the path of the weak, to reconcile hearts long estranged, to restore spiritual discipline to its primitive vigour, to place the best and purest of Christian Societies on a base broad enough to stand against all the attacks of earth and hell, these were objects which might well justify some modification, not of Catholic institutions, but of national or provincial usages."

In 1691, on Ken's refusal to take the oath of allegiance, Beveridge was offered the bishopric of Bath and Wells. His conduct on this occasion has been greatly misunderstood; Macaulay speaks of him as being "though an honest, not a strong-minded man;" yet the explanation of his indecision and of his final resolution to decline the office, is very simple. On the one hand, Beveridge had no doubt of the lawfulness of accepting the appointment from King William, as he had already taken the oaths: on the other hand, he was unwilling to sit on the throne from which the saintly Ken had been thrust out. After considerable hesitation, by the advice of Archbishop Sancroft, he refused the bishopric. His scrupulosity did not protect him from the attacks of the pamphleteers of his day; but there are few who will now refuse to do honour to the motives by which he was influenced. It will not at least be denied that he relinquished a post of honour and dignity, and he seems, besides, to have forfeited the favour of the

King, for he was offered no further promotion until the reign of Queen Anne.

By this Queen he was in 1704, when he was already sixty-seven years of age, promoted to the See of S. Asaph, where he laboured for about four years with the same apostolic zeal and fervour which he had shown in a less elevated position. "He was no sooner exalted to the Episcopal Chair," says the editor of the 'Private Thoughts,' "but in a most pathetic and obliging letter to the clergy of his diocese, he recommended to them 'the duty of catechising and instructing the people committed to their charge, in the principles of the Christian religion; to the end they might know what they were to believe and do in order to salvation;' and told them, 'he thought it necessary to begin with that without which, whatever else he or they should do, would turn to little or no account, as to the main end of the ministry.' And to enable them to do this the more effectually, he sent them a plain and easy 'exposition upon the Church Catechism.'"

He died at his lodging in the Cloisters of Westminster Abbey, on the 5th of March, 1707 (N.S. 1708); and was buried in S. Paul's Cathedral. He died as he had lived, with a heart full of love to God and man, and with an unwavering devotion to the Church in which he had ministered. After making a certain provision for his relatives, he left the bulk of his property to the recently-founded Gospel Pro-

pagation Society and Christian Knowledge Society; but his zeal for the Church had not made him forgetful of the needs of the people among whom he was born. To eight of the poor housekeepers of Barrow he left forty shillings a year, to be distributed equally among them on Christmas Eve, regard being had in the selection to those who had been most constant at prayers, and at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper the foregoing year; and to the Curacy of Mount Sorrel and Vicarage of Barrow he bequeathed twenty pounds a year for ever, on condition that Morning and Evening Prayer should be read daily in the chapel and parish church; and if it should so happen that this provision should not be carried out, then his bequest was to be applied for the instruction of children in the principles of the Christian religion, according to the doctrine of the Church of England.

Such was Bishop Beveridge as a man, a Christian, a teacher of the Christian faith. But the question may still be asked as to the rank which may fairly be conceded to him among the great preachers of past times. On this point opinions will always differ, but an impartial judgment will not refuse him a high place among the faithful, the earnest, the eloquent witnesses for Divine truth.

It is true that he was not free from some of the faults of his age. He may have committed himself to statements on the subject of human reason and its relation to Divine revelation which we could not

accept. He has been accused of High Calvinism; but a candid examination of his writings will not support the charge. On some occasions, indeed, he was carried away by his feelings to forget the solemn caution of Christ against supposing that the greatest sufferers were the greatest sinners. He compares King Charles, without any apparent misgiving, to the Proto-Martyr, S. Stephen.* He does not hesitate to declare that the Fire of London was sent as a punishment for the great rebellion and the murder of the King, in which the City had so great a part.† These may have been faults of taste and judgment; but they will not be greatly regarded in a general estimate of his work.

A German writer, who speaks highly of his books on the Canons, says his religious writings are of small value; and a French author tells us that his sermons have nothing very extraordinary in point of profundity of ideas. This may be in a measure true, and we can hardly put him in the very highest rank of preachers. He had not the gorgeous imagination of Taylor, or the polished eloquence of Massillon, or the eagle wing of Bossuet. Those, moreover, who regard florid language, heaped-up metaphors, or flights of fancy as a necessary adjunct to true eloquence, will deny that he was eloquent. But those who judge by truer canons of criticism, will

* Serm. IV. of "Sermons on particular Occasions," vol. vi. p. 432 *sq.* † Serm. LXXXVI., vol. iv. p. 154 *sq.*

67718

acknowledge that he was not destitute of this great gift of God.

If well-ordered thoughts expressed in language, pure, simple, and fervent, spoken by a tongue whose every utterance was truth and goodness, kindled by the glowing fire of love to God and to man; if these things constitute eloquence, then Beveridge must have been eloquent. "He had a way," said the pious Robert Nelson, in his life of Bishop Bull, "of gaining people's hearts and touching their consciences, which bore some resemblance to the Apostolic age; and, when it shall appear that those bright preachers, who have been ready to throw contempt upon his Lordship's performances, can set forth as large a list of persons whom they have converted by their preaching, as I could produce of those who owed the change of their lives, under God, to the instructions of this pious prelate, I shall readily own that they are superior to his Lordship in the pulpit; though, considering what learned works he published in the cause of religion, and what an eminent pattern he was of true primitive piety, I am not inclined to think that his Lordship will, upon the whole of his character, be easily equalled by any one."

Even if we cannot go so far as a contemporary writer* who quotes a passage from one of his Sermons, which may, he says, "in acuteness of judgment,

* 'Guardian,' No. 74. June 5, 1713

ornament of speech, and true sublime, compare with any of the choicest writings of the ancient Fathers," we shall hardly quarrel with the testimony of another,* who says: "There is something so great, primitive, and apostolical, in his writings, that it creates an awe and veneration in our mind; the importance of his subjects is above the decoration of words; and what is great and majestical in itself, looketh the most like itself the less it is adorned."

It would be easy, did our time permit, to give multitudes of examples of the homely directness, the serious and affectionate earnestness, the powerful incisiveness, with which he appeals to the consciences of his hearers, now warning them of the danger of impenitence, and again setting forth the fatherly love and mercy and grace of Almighty God.

Take, for example, the beginning of his Sermon on "the exemplary holiness of the primitive Christians," as a specimen of his plain and direct dealing with the conscience of his hearers.

"Having this opportunity of preaching the word of God to you, I heartily wish that I could do it so effectually, that by His blessing upon it, ye may all be the better for it in this life and the next; for otherwise my preaching will be in vain; and your hearing also will be in vain; and so it always will

* Dr. H. Felton, 'Dissertation on Reading the Classics, and forming a just Style.'

be, unless, when you hear the word, you receive it, as the Thessalonians did, 'not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.'"

Towards the end of the same Sermon, he goes on: "This, therefore, is that which I would now persuade you all to do, and should think myself happy if I could do it. Play no longer with religion, as people commonly do, but set upon the practice of it in good earnest. As ye profess to believe the Gospel, live according to the rules and precepts of it, that ye may adorn your holy profession with a suitable conversation. . . . Strive all ye can to shine as lights in the world, that ye may be the great examples of true piety and virtue to one another, and to all that are about you. This would be the most effectual means to convince the enemies of our Church and holy religion of their errors and mistakes, when they see you who profess it, so far exceeding and outdoing them in your constancy at your devotions, in your frequency at the Holy Communion; in your temperance and sobriety; in your meekness, patience, and humility; in your truth and justice in all your dealings together; in your liberality to your poor brethren; in your zeal for God; in your loyalty to your Sovereign; in your kindness, love, and charity to one another; and in all such good works as God hath prepared for you in your several places and callings to walk in; still trusting in your blessed

Saviour, both for His assistance of you in what ye do, and for God's acceptance of it when it is done.

"This is the way, too, to have a place ready prepared for you in heaven against your departure out of this wicked world, that you may live together with the glorified saints and angels and with Christ Himself, in all ease and plenty, in all the joy, happiness, and glory that creatures are capable of, not only for some time, but to all eternity, and all through His merits and mediation for you."*

It would be easy to multiply examples of the application of his subject, which must have been not simply what we call effective, but most deeply impressive. Let us take only one other example from his Sermon on the "wisdom of being holy." The text of the Sermon is, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom:" "Men and brethren, I have endeavoured to show and prove this day, that every sinner is a fool, and every sin a folly. I know there are many understanding persons among you who have heard what hath been said upon this subject; some, I hope, who are wise towards God understanding the things that appertain to their everlasting peace, and such, I am sure, cannot but acknowledge the truth of what they have heard. Others, I fear, may be wise enough for the world, understanding how to manage their trades to the

* Serm. CII., vol. iv. pp. 441–452.

best advantage, and how to make a good bargain as well as the best; and such can hardly be persuaded that they are fools in anything, because they think themselves to be wise in some things. To such my humble advice is, that you would seriously weigh what ye have heard, and not suffer yourselves to be fooled into a vain conceit of your own wisdom; for assure yourselves there is not the ignorantest person in the congregation that fears God, but is far wiser than the wisest of you that do not; for such a one's little knowledge is true wisdom, your great cunning is your real folly; and therefore, if you would manifest yourselves for the future to be wise and prudent persons indeed, lay aside your former follies, and devote yourself wholly to the fear and service of Almighty God, for till you do so, you have not attained to the very first degree of wisdom, 'for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.'" *

It may be that these words seem but cold and feeble when repeated in this day by other lips; but I am persuaded that few could have heard them spoken by the lips of him who penned them, animated by the spirit which dwelt within him, without being, for the moment at least, wiser and better men, without some resolve forming itself within them, however transient and evanescent, henceforth to live less to the world and self, and more to God.

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* Serm. XCVIII., vol. iv. p. 389.

If we do not propose Beveridge as a model for imitation, it is because we do not believe that any preacher can be, in the strict sense of the word, a model for another; it is because he belongs to an age with which our own can, at best, have but partial sympathy. If, however, we look beyond the circumstances of place and time, if we penetrate to the life and spirit of the man, then there is hardly a characteristic of his life or teaching which the Christian preacher would not do well to imitate.

In his patient toil for the acquisition of sacred knowledge, in the entire devotion of his heart and soul and life to the service of God, in his deep realisation of the Divine presence and grace, in his fervent love for souls, in the manly simplicity of his language, in the subordination of all his teaching to the salvation of men and the glory of God, he is worthy of earnest study and imitation. Happy will it be for the Church of England when she has many preachers and pastors like William Beveridge; still more happy when she has multitudes of children who thankfully receive such teaching and submit to such guidance!

WILSON,

THE SAINTLY PREACHER.

"Lord who shall dwell in thy tabernacle, or who shall rest upon thy holy hill? Even he that leadeth an uncorrupt life, and doeth the thing that is right, and speaketh the truth from his heart."—*Psalm* xv. 1, 2.

The glory of the Saints of God—Contrast between Thomas Wilson and Jonathan Swift—Wilson as Tutor and Chaplain—His aversion to Pluralities—His work as a Bishop—His attempts to restore ecclesiastical discipline—His severe trials—Imprisoned in Castle Rushen—The Bishop at Court—His last days—His Works—General characteristics of his Sermons—Absence of any allusions to Nature, History, or contemporary events—His inferiority to the great Preachers of the Seventeenth Century—Moral deadness of the Eighteenth Century—Wilson's sincerity—Behind the Sermons stood the Man—His life and example lend preciousness to his Works.

As the life and death of each separate coral insect adds to the noiseless growth of the reef, which ultimately becomes an island or a continent, so does the life and death of each individual man add its permanent quota to those vast accumulations of experience and impulse which determine the conditions of humanity. He and his work may seem alike to perish; but just as no particle of matter can be destroyed, but only be caught up in the magic eddy

of nature to be recombined in new forms with other elements;—and just as no force can be finally exhausted, but remains impressed for ever on the material universe;—so even the obscurest man who has ever lived has exercised a real influence, be it ever so infinitesimal, on the mighty whole of the human race. Some men have directed the great movements which alter the relations of kingdoms; some men have materially modified the physical conditions of the globe; some men, by their inventions, have given new developments to the aims and labours of mankind—have, by their works of art, haunted our imagination, or by their writings enriched our thoughts. But, among all these, none have a stronger claim to universal gratitude than those Saints of God who have kindled their names like beacon-lights upon the hills, to show to what lofty regions the foot of man can reach, what pure air the life of man can breathe. Others have improved the conditions of living; these have enhanced the blessedness of life itself. Others have brightened the gloom of things seen and temporal; these have fixed our hearts on the things unseen and eternal. And such was he of whom I am to-day bidden to speak. The transcendent merit of Thomas Wilson, Bishop of Sodor and Man, is that in an age of godlessness he was pre-eminently a Saint of God. He was not a man of genius; he was not a man of great

* See Mr. M. Arnold's 'Last Essay on Religion,' p. 71.

attainments; he was not a man of keen sagacity; he was not a remarkable orator; he was not a distinguished author; but he was something higher and better than if he had been all these at once, for he was "the last survivor," if not "of the saints,"* yet certainly of the saints of the English Church—the last of those too few in number, in our Reformed Communion, on whom that glorious title can be bestowed.

Thomas Wilson was born of humble but pious parentage, at Neston in Cheshire, in the year 1663. He was educated at Chester, and entered the University of Dublin, at the age of eighteen, with a sizarship of £20 a year. In the same term was entered a boy of fourteen, whose name was Jonathan Swift. It is a tradition that they knew each other, and that, in after years, the Bishop of Sodor and Man declined a present of some of his works from the Dean of St. Patrick's.* But what a contrast was there between the careers and characters of these two youths! The one a man of colossal genius, destined to become an intense politician, a scathing satirist, a terrific pamphleteer, with all the fame of those who mould the policy of empires; and yet the most miserable of men; doomed to break the hearts of those that loved him—to be lacerated by a savage indignation, which vented itself in raging sarcasm—to pollute the sacred page of literature with mis-

* 'Life,' by Keble, vol i. p. 13.

anthropy and filth; a man who had fought with the wild beasts of fury, and envy, and want, and hate, and who bore in every limb the bleeding marks of the horrid contest; a man who seems ever to have heard, around his head, the scream of malignant harpies, and the convulsive flap of their obscene funereal wings, and who, "dying at the top like a blighted tree," expired at last in agony and madness, "a driveller and a show." The other, a man of very modest capacity, of small literary influence, of no political weight; who lived, not in the blaze of fame and publicity, but in the deep valley and shadow of retirement;—but whose character was one of heavenly sweetness; whose whole labours were for the good of his fellow-men; who loved and honoured them as sincerely as Swift despised and loathed; who broke no loving hearts, but bound up many a wounded one; and who, not tormented as Swift was by the horrors of memory, and so "dying in a rage like a poisoned rat in a hole," * passed away amid the tears of sorrowing thousands, and carried his white hairs, like a crown of glory, to a happy and a deeply honoured grave. Could two careers of schoolfellows be more different?—the one like a glaring meteor, plunging through storm and the wrath of the elements into the twilight, into the evening, into the black dark night; the other a sweet and shining dawn, that brightened more and more unto the perfect day.

* Swift's Letter to Bolingbroke, 'Works,' vol. xvii. p. 274.

After a blameless but undistinguished college career, in the year 1686 Wilson was ordained: and the exquisite prayer which he yearly used on the anniversary of his ordination,—"Give me, O Lord God, I humbly beg, a sober, a patient, an understanding, a devout, a religious, and courageous heart. . . ."*—may serve as an epitome of the spirit of his life. In the same year he was appointed curate of New Church on £30 a year, and from that time, if not before, he always, to the end of his life, set aside one-tenth of his income for the poor. In 1692 he became chaplain to Lord Derby, and tutor to his son, Lord Strange. We know from history how low was the position of domestic chaplains, and, indeed, of the clergy generally, in the eighteenth century, and how basely complaisant was too often their tone and conduct; and I fear that there were very few among them who would have shown the courage which Mr. Wilson did, in venturing to drop hot sealing-wax on Lord Strange's hand when he was about to sign a document which he had not read, and even to rebuke his noble patron for extravagance and neglect of his affairs. There, too, he first set to his age the rare example of refusing to hold a living at which he could not reside.† So far from resenting his manly rebuke,

* See the whole of this beautiful prayer, 'Life,' vol. i. pp. 26, 27.

† He had made a vow that he would never hold two ecclesiastical preferments with cure of souls.—'Life,' vol. i. p. 65.

Lord Derby, the very next year, compelled him, in spite of his most sincere *nolo episcopari*, to become Bishop of Sodor and Man. It was so poor a bishopric* that all Wilson's predecessors had been only too glad to supplement its poverty by an English benefice; but Wilson, on being again offered the living of Badworth, in Yorkshire, again set to a corrupt and worldly Church the higher example of refusing it—"strange and highflown" as his scruples must then have seemed. Accordingly he was made Doctor of Laws by Archbishop Tenison, consecrated Bishop, and in 1698, after a sail which occupied four days, landed in the little diocese where he was to rule for no less than eight-and-fifty years. The prayer which he wrote on April 11, 1698, the day of his enthronement, is well worth study, as showing alike the spirit on which he entered upon his new and sacred duties, and the spirit in which, by God's help, he was enabled to fulfil them to the last.†

The scene of his future labours was a poor and lonely place, and the house, which had been for six years uninhabited, was in great decay.‡ But it was

* When Dr. Barwick had been most affectionately besought by Lord Derby to accept it, Lord Clarendon had written, "I cannot blame you for not being desirous to accept the Bishopric of Man, which if you shall do, nobody would accuse you of ambition."

† 'Life,' vol. i. p. 96.

‡ On the acquittal of the Seven Bishops, his predecessor, Bishop Levinz, had written to Archbishop Sancroft, "This good news will make me goe with more cheerfulness into the Long Saile I am now going to in my Patmos, as your Grace usu-

with no thoughts of gloom and discontent—it was not only with no desire for preferment in England, but even with a determination not to take it,—that Bishop Wilson landed in his little Patmos. He meant to make this his home, there to live and there to die. There he married, there his children were born, and there he lived for fifty years a widower. He threw himself with love and diligence into all his duties. He preached, he visited, he practised a free and genial hospitality; he indulged his benevolent heart in the largest charity; he built; he planted; he restored churches; he improved the agriculture of the island; he promoted parochial libraries; he made efforts to found colleges, and elevate the theological standard of his clergy; he drew up the 'Principles and Duties of Christianity,' the first book in the Manx language; he laboured in season and out of season, and won the love of all good and honest men. Even in his brief visits to England he supported charity schools at a time when they were

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ally stiles it, where all the comfort I can procure myself is this topique only, that there I may have time enough for my prayers —since that poor desolate place will hardly afford me any other than He to converse with." He then begs for "a House and Prebend att Winchester," or something similar, to prevent the necessity of his wintering in the severe clime of Man, because he has "a title too bigge for his scant fortunes to maintain;" and again he speaks of Bishopscourt as "a disconsolate residence," and describes "the terrible storms, tempests, and prodigious winds and inundations of rayne of which he has never seen the like, and if there are these in summer what he is to expect in winter God alone knows."—'Life,' vol. i. p. 98–101.

still regarded with selfish suspicion; and was, to his immortal honour, among the earliest founders of institutions so excellent as the Societies for the Propagation of the Gospel, and the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. But his main work, and his constant residence, was at Bishopscourt. *Tuta et parvula*—"safe and very small"—was the motto in which he described his little diocese, and to which he remained faithful to the end.*

And let it not be supposed for a moment that he was influenced by so ignoble a motive as love of ease. The little island was much more of a thistle than a rose. Its bleak atmosphere, its scanty population, its ignorant clergy, its deep poverty, its entire isolation, might have been easily borne by one whose sole aim in life was faithfully to cultivate the little corner of the vineyard which God had entrusted to him. But this was far from all. Bishop Wilson was a High Churchman with a sincere belief in ecclesiastical discipline, and this discipline he carried out to an extent and with a rigour then utterly un-

* "Burning, indeed, and shining, like the Baptist, in an evil time, he seemeth as if a beacon lighted on his small island to show what his Lord and Saviour could do in spite of man."—J. H. Newman. When he preached before Queen Caroline in 1711, so greatly was she struck by his sweetness and dignity, that she offered him an English See, which he declined with the simple and noble words—so unlike the general spirit of his age—"that with the blessing of God he could do some small good in the little spot he then resided on, whereas, if he were removed into a larger sphere, he might be lost, and forget his duty to his flock and to his God."

known. The annals of his episcopate — faithful, humble, saintly as it was — are yet inexpressibly dreary. They consist mainly of the miserable details of provincial vice among both clergy and people—a tissue of small crimes, disagreeably diversified by large ones—together with the warnings, penances, and excommunications which these entailed. People are censured, admonished, and have to give security even for offences so venial as not going to church, or for sleeping in church,* and there is a quite incessant doing of penance in white sheets.† There was a bridle, of which a specimen is still preserved, to gag people guilty of abuse and slander; and instead of being, as in England, whipped at the cart's tail, certain offenders were dragged through the water by soldiers at the stern of a boat. It is hardly to be wondered at that the energetic enforcement of a rapidly obsolescing system—even by a man so saintly and tender that he mingled his tears with those of the offenders whom he condemned—gradually aroused an organised opposition.‡ I do not propose to detail

* Also, for shaving during church-time, for playing with a dog in church, for swimming a duck and a spaniel on Sunday evening, even for fiddling on Saturday evening.—'Life,' vol. i. p. 351; vol. ii. p. 642.

† It shows the rude state of things then prevalent, that on one occasion a ragged communion table-cloth was used as the sheet of penance!

‡ See 'Life,' vol. i. pp. 188, 442; vol. ii. pp. 526, 564, &c. There is a certain Archdeacon Horrobin, with his miserable heresies; a number of feminine slanders, in which a Madame Horne, the wife of Lord Derby's governor, is mixed up; the defiant contumacy

all those wretched quarrels. One has scarcely patience to read the disgraceful illegalities, the grotesque state-documents, the churlishly insulting missives of the ill-bred and insignificant people who were Lord Derby's officials in the government of Man. For years of his life the Bishop "walked with his head in a cloud of poisonous flies;" and at last, to the amazed and indignant grief of the whole island, he, with two of his Vicars-General, was thrown into prison in Castle Rushen.* Nothing could have been more beautiful than his conduct under these trying circumstances. In a damp dark cell, punished like a felon, "with inexpressible hardship," his letters intercepted, his messengers "treated with all the disrespect imaginable," he continued for nine weeks to pray for his enemies, and labour at the translation of the Manx Bible. At last he managed to lodge an appeal with the Privy Council, was released, and escorted back to his home amid the tumultuous joy of his people, with shouts and bonfires and scattered flowers. But he had after all to pay the heavy costs of his appeal, and, true to his earliest principles,

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of all connected with the Government, on the plea that as the Lord's retainers and family they are exempt from ecclesiastical authority; refusal of the Government to lend soldiers to carry out the Bishop's sentences; the pathetic story of the soldier Halsal, who was practically killed by the reckless insolence of Governor Horne;—all of which things culminate in the explosion of hate and insults which found vent in the bishop's imprisonment.

* June 29, 1722.—'Life,' vol. ii. p. 518.

once more refused the English bishopric which was offered him in indemnification. In these struggles with the petty pelting officers of the place—hundredth-rate men, dressed in a little brief authority—a lonely widower, a bereaved father, amid incessant annoyances and shameful calumnies, he passed long years. Amid such a paltry environment of provincial malignities there is absolutely nothing beautiful but this good man's life, who, "being convinced that he was no proprietor" (oh that all English bishops of old had borne this in mind!), "but only a steward of the Church's patrimony, and finding by experience that God would be no man's debtor," was for years putting by forty per cent. of his income, for pious uses in his own diocese and among the poor.*

More peaceful days came at last, and a scene or two is illustrative both of the man and of the time. The Bishop was at Court, and when he had kissed the King's hand,—"Nobody," said the Queen to her ladies, "envies that honest man his bishopric." "Nor do I envy any one theirs," said he. "I believe you," said Queen Caroline; "you are a very honest man."

"See here, my lords," said the Queen (on another occasion), when she had several prelates with her, "is a bishop who does not care for a

* 'Life,' vol. ii. p. 493.

translation." "No, indeed, an't please your Majesty," said he, "I will not leave my wife in my old age because she is poor." Even the heart of George II. was won by such transparent goodness. "The Bishop came into the drawing-room in his usual simple dress, having a small black cap on the top of his head, with his hair flowing and silvery, and his shoes fastened, like those of an ancient Manxman, with leathern thongs instead of buckles. As soon as he entered the presence-chamber, the King stepped out of the circle of his courtiers, and advancing towards the Bishop, came to him, took him by the hand, and said, "My lord, I beg your prayers."

His latter days were spent almost exclusively in the duties of his diocese; and it was in his own house at Bishopscourt that finally, in his ninety-third year, gentle sickness came upon him, and gradual decay. In his last days all was calm and beautiful. God gave him songs in the night. From that time to the hour of his death the very wanderings of his delirium were praise and prayer. There was a beauty and dignity about his look and manner which impressed every beholder with awe; and he died as he had lived, with holy words upon his lips.

The works of Bishop Wilson were his 'Manx Catechism;' his 'History of the Isle of Man' in Bishop Gibson's edition of Camden; his 'Instruction for the Indians;' his 'Introduction to the Lord's

Supper;' his 'Maxims,' 'Sacra Privata,' and 'Sermons.' It is by the last four books that he is mainly known, and the mere fact that they are still used, admired, and valued, is alone a sufficient proof that they appeal to deep feelings and supply real needs.*

It is, however, as a Preacher that we have now to do with him, and it is his position as a Preacher that I wish mainly to define. And I must say at once that, in a literary point of view, his Sermons can hardly be held up as a remarkable model of style, of method, or even of theologic thought. Little more can be said of them than that his style is very plain, his method exceedingly simple, and his religious opinions unquestioningly orthodox. They contain so little that is specially rememberable, that the Bishop preached them again and again, over a space of fifty-eight years, with scarcely a word of alteration, and even "in the same words to the same audiences at no long spaces of time."† And if this shows "how

* 'Manx Catechism,' 1699. 'Plain Instructions for the Better Understanding of the Lord's Supper,' 1736. 'Instructions for the Indians,' 1740. 'Parochialia,' 1788. 'Maxims of Piety and Christianity,' 1789. 'Sacra Privata,' 1800; and "now first printed entire from the original manuscripts," 1853. 'Works and Life,' ed. Crutwell, 1781. 'Works, and Life,' by Keble, in 'Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology,' 7 vols., 1847–1852. 'History of the Isle of Man,' in Bishop Gibson's ed. of 'Camden Britannica,' 1722. 'The Holy Bible, with Notes,' &c., edited by Rev. C. Crutwell, 1785.

† "He followed in this respect," says Mr. Keble, "as well as in the fact of their being written, the recommendation of Bishop Sanderson, who, in both these respects, set the pattern to the generation to which Wilson belonged."—'Life,' vol. i. p. 278.

small scruple he had in repeating himself, and how little he cared to be original in teaching men their duty," it shows also that his Sermons owed very little to the emotions of the moment, and that he did not in the least desire to create those delicate and intense impressions which can be produced but once by the same utterance on the same minds. It is quite impossible to imagine such sermons as Jeremy Taylor's "House of Feasting," or South's "Fall of Man,"* preached twice over to the same audience. The glory of images once caught under the fresh sunlight of the imagination cannot be reproduced, and the language of fervour must be fresh from the soul, if it aims at kindling any answering glow. But there is really no reason why sermons such as those of Bishop Wilson—plain practical homilies in short simple paragraphs—should not be preached to the same audience almost any number of times. In his 'Maxims' and his 'Sacra Privata' there is a certain tenderness and sweetness of cadence which almost constitutes a style, though they have none of the flowing rhythms of Bishop Andrewes, or the occasional beauties of Bishop Hall, or the poetic richness of Bishop Jeremy Taylor. They remind us more of the 'Imitatio Christi'—though devoid of the subtle, indescribable charm,—the mystic splendour stealing over the oracular gems—which characterises that im-

* "Man as created in the image of God."—Sermons on Gen. i. 27 (South, 1633–1716).

mortal little book. But Wilson's Sermons are undoubtedly inferior to the 'Maxims' and the 'Sacra Privata.' If we looked only at their negative characteristics, we should not value them very highly. There is not in them all one burst of passion—one flight of eloquence; not one striking metaphor; not one profoundly original thought; not one illuminative aspect of duty; not one deep touch of pathos; not one phrase which quivers with the writer's own emotion; not only "no thoughts that breathe or words that burn," but scarcely even one graceful allusion or happy illustration. His utterance is not the flight of the eagle, but the gliding of the swallow, and through the smooth air of his exhortation

"Radit iter liquidum celeres neque promovet alas." *

For instance, his home was cast for nearly sixty years in a spot of extreme beauty, where he daily heard the voices of the mountain and the sea, and saw the mists shroud the mountain-tops, and through rents of their white vail caught glimpses of sunset, and colourings of amazing loveliness. We can well imagine how many an exquisite and immortal image such surroundings would have flung on the reflective mirror of a poetic susceptibility; but, so far as I have

* When he was ordained, his revered friend Mr. Hewetson had in a remarkable list of directions advised him "to avoid all juvenile affectation of wit, learning, or fine language, and all deep and unuseful speculations and controversies," and certainly Wilson very literally followed the advice.

observed, there is not in Wilson's Sermons, from beginning to end, one single allusion to the magnificence or loveliness of the outer world. Nor again, is there any reference worth speaking of to the great world of books. The Sermons of the seventeenth century divines are rich with the spoils of their oceanic reading, and he who would edit their writings would need a library coextensive with the learning of that day: but the editor of Wilson needs little or nothing beyond a Bible and an Apocrypha. Nor, again, does he ever refer to that other inestimable revelation, the Book of History. Some of his mighty predecessors, using the experience of the past as a mirror to the present, had laid under contribution the annals of the world: but the reader of Wilson need hardly be aware that there has ever been any nation except the English and the Jews. And, once more, Wilson is singularly devoid of the faintest reflection on the circumstances of his day. It was the age of HUME, yet he does not contribute one iota of argument to the defence of Christianity: it was the age of POPE, yet he scarcely quotes or alludes to, one line of poetry:* it was the age of ADDISON and JOHNSON, yet he makes no reference to contemporary literature: it was the age of BERKELEY and BUTLER, yet for him metaphysics are non-existent: it was the age

* In Sermon XXVII. he quotes six lines from Samuel Woodford's 'Paraphrase of the Psalms.'

of HOADLY, yet he has nothing to contribute to the Bangorian controversy: it was the age of LAW and FÉNÉLON, yet he has not a word to say of mysticism or quietism: it was the age of the early preaching of WESLEY and WHITFIELD, yet he never touches upon that breath of reviving influence, which —alas! too late it may be to avert the Nemesis of her neglect and worldliness!—was beginning to breathe over the dead Church like a stream of fire.* From his early manhood vast events had shaken the kingdom; but though he had been twenty-two years old at the time of the Bloody Assizes, and had lived through such crises as the Great Revolution, the Massacre of Glencoe, the victories of Marlborough, the Peace of Utrecht, the accession of the House of Brunswick, and the adventures of Prince Charles Edward—though he had witnessed careers so varied, so melancholy, so instructive as those of many of his illustrious contemporaries in a stirring and troublous epoch—yet there is nothing in his writings to indicate the existence of Jesuits, or Jacobites, or Methodists, or Whigs, or Tories. I fear that an ordinary man in these days preaching the Sermons of Bishop Wilson, unaided by the saintliness and unction which

* Wilson, 1663–1755; Hume, 1711–1776; Pope, 1688–1744; Addison, 1672–1719; Johnson, 1709–1784; Butler, 1695–1752; Hoadly, 1676–1711; Law, 1686–1761; Fénélon, 1651–1715; Wesley, 1703–1791; Whitfield, 1714–1770. (Reigns of James II., 1685–1689; William III. and Mary, 1689–1702; Anne, 1702–1714; George I., 1714–1727; George II., 1727–1760.)

gave to those Sermons all their power, might be voted an unoriginal retailer of familiar truths.*

How is it, then, that Bishop Wilson was undoubtedly a great preacher; that so good and fastidious a judge as Queen Caroline called him her silver-tongued Bishop; that he was much followed and admired; that the various London Societies were always anxious to secure his advocacy; that he has even been called "the most perfect Gospel preacher among uninspired men"? Why is it that, even in great English towns, crowds would flock round him, with the request, "Bless me too, my Lord"; and that when "these divine discourses," as one of his clergy calls them, were preached in Manx after his death, crowds began to flock again to the churches which Methodism was beginning to empty?

I answer first that, though his Sermons were not great in the way of literary greatness; though they partake of, and illustrate, that downward movement, which, from the splendour of Barrow and Taylor, plunged like a flake of falling fire through the chill transparency of Clarke and Tillotson, into

* "It is my full conviction that in any half-dozen sermons of Donne or Taylor there are more thoughts, more facts and images, more excitement to inquiry and intellectual effort, than are presented to the congregations of the present day in as many churches or meetings during twice as many months."—Coleridge's 'Lay Sermons,' p. 227. But it should be added in fairness that the clergy of to-day have, as a rule, to produce as many sermons—or compositions which bear that name—in a year as the 17th century divines had to do in all their lives.

the orthodox dulness of Beveridge, and which, when all but extinguished, sputtered feebly amid white ashes in the tawdry verbosity of Harvey and the artificial rhetoric of Blair;* yet they were superior to the ordinary, and beyond all comparison superior to some of the more pretentious, sermons of the age in which he lived.†

1. For in the first place they were absolutely sincere. The age in which they were preached was a godless age; it was "an age, whose poetry was without romance, whose philosophy was without insight, and whose public men were without character." It abounded in "immoral thoughtlessness." A "loose and ignorant Deism" was freely prattled in all fashionable circles, and general scorn of religion was, as always, attended by general profligacy of manners.‡ The clergy themselves were remiss in their

* Tillotson, 1630–1694; Beveridge, 1636–1707; Clarke, 1675–1729; Harvey, 1714–1758; Blair, 1718–1799.

† Milton speaks of the ordinary sermons of his day with unspeakable scorn, as "treading the constant round of common doctrinal heads," and the book-draft "out of which, as out of an alphabet or sol-fa," a parochial minister, who had reached his Herculean pillars of a warm benefice, would be unspeakably furnished to the performance of more than a weekly charge of sermoning—"not to reckon up the infinite helps of interlinearies, breviaries, synopses, and other loitering gear."—'Areopagitica.'

‡ See, among hundreds of other authorities, Butler's 'Analogy,' and 'Charges,' *passim*; the Preface to Cave's 'Primitive Christianity;' Dr. Stanhope's 'Sermon before the House of Lords;' many of Wilson's own Sermons; Wesley's 'Further Appeal;' Hartley's 'Observations on Man,' vol. ii. p. 441. "In this estimate," says Mr. Mark Pattison, "the followers

labours, and self-indulgent in their lives. There were some even among leading statesmen who were drunken, illiterate, and coarse. There were members of the Royal Family who set a scandalous example. The odious letters of Chesterfield show with what unblushing cynicism a father could teach immorality to his son as a necessary element of a fashionable career. The uneducated and shamefully neglected masses sank into terrible depths of crime and brutality. The pictures of Hogarth, the novels of Smollett and Fielding, show that English morals had fallen to their very nadir of degradation. And how did God's ministers attempt to stem this torrent of iniquity? what was the teaching they offered, what the motives they opposed to all this crime and denial of God? Nothing, for the most part, but the coldest and nakedest morality. They were not Prophets; they were not Seers; they were not even well-instructed Scribes; they were but cold Essayists and dull Utilitarians. Their Gospel was a Gospel of bald respectability. There was no passionate appeal to the wavering, no fiery denunciation of the insolent wrong-doer. Cringing flattery, unblushing inconsistency, open worldliness, greedy hunting of preferments,—Bishops and Archbishops amassing colossal fortunes, and leaving their trail across their pro-

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of Mill and Carlyle agree with those of Dr. Newman." 'Essays and Reviews,' pp. 255, 322; Mahon's 'History of England,' chap. xi., &c. &c.

vinces by the shameless nepotism, which gorged with pluralities of every desirable benefice their sons and kinsmen,—a clergy addicted to such aims as these*—a clergy painfully anxious to relieve themselves of the crying sin of enthusiasm,†—a clergy which revelled in such pompous euphuisms and polished nullities as those of Blair, could never deeply stir the heart of the age. For a living coal from the altar they offered to their generation a glittering icicle from the study. They applied feeble sprinklings of tepid water to an age which needed burning deluges of baptismal fire. The very conception of a sermon became to the last degree artificial and inane. "I should think a clergyman might distinguish himself," said the poet Shenstone, "by composing a set of sermons on the ordinary virtues extolled by the classic writers, introducing the ornamental flourishes of Horace," &c.! Even Bishops, in their charges, referred their clergy to the satires of Juvenal,‡ instead of bidding them catch their moral intensity from Isaiah or St. James.

* For the tone and character of the clergy after the Restoration and onwards see Burnet's 'History of his own Times,' vol. i. pp. 186, 258; 'Diary,' Feb. 16, 1668; Macaulay's 'History,' chap. iii.; Stoughton's 'Church of the Restoration,' vol. i. p. 511; and nearly all allusions to them in the contemporary literature.

† "Histories incomparably more authentic than Mr. Hume's prove by irrefragable evidence the aphorism of ancient wisdom that nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm. For what is enthusiasm but the oblivion and swallowing up of self in an object dearer than self, or in an idea more vivid?" —Coleridge's 'Lay Sermons,' p. 25.

‡ Bishop Burnet's 'Pastoral Letters.'

The conception of religion had dwindled into a calculating selfishness, and a prudential commonplace. The current theology is typified by a sermon which explained the Fatherhood of God as an elegant metaphor.* The chief anxiety of the preachers seemed to be that none should suppose them to be so utterly foolish as to urge any one to be righteous overmuch. Enthusiasm? it needed men who were "boiling in spirit"† to continue the work of the Prophets and the Apostles; it needed a voice of thunder, and a tongue of fire, to shame into decency, and startle into repentance this corrupt and guilty age.

2. And though Wilson's was no voice of fire, yet his preaching was far above the average teaching of his age. He has this surpassing merit, that "he never penned one sentence which savoured of unreality." Among his contemporaries he shone like a light in the world. His style is exquisitely lucid, and has a certain dignity and sweetness of its own. If his sermons have no special force, they have at least an admirable directness; and if they have no eloquence, yet they are not devoid of tenderness and unction. They assume all Christian doctrine; they ignore all speculative theology; but they have these three marked characteristics:—a very practical aim; an

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* See Clarke's Sermon on "Call no man your Father on Earth;" and see some excellent remarks in Mr. Leslie Stephen's 'English Thought in the Eighteenth Century.'

† Ζέοντες ἐν πνεύματι (Rom. xii. 11).

intimate knowledge of Scripture; and the peaceful calm of a most untroubled faith. They do not indeed glow with an inspiring passion, but they do shine with a serene and heavenly light. And if they never soar,—if they have no exordium, no peroration, no one prevailing all-absorbing motive,—if they never rise to a climax, or startle by a paradox, or arouse by an antithesis—yet, on the other hand, they never sink. They have in them no word of folly, no tinge of affectation, no shadow of bad taste. They need, it has been acutely said, to be tested by immediate translation into action. "To think on Bishop Wilson with veneration," said Dr. Johnson, "is only to agree with the whole Christian world. I hope to look into his books with other purposes than those of criticism, and after their perusal not only to write but to love better." Accept them as an authoritative guide to religious conduct, drawn from deep and lifelong experience, and then, ceasing to be ordinary, they become sublime.* And this is why one of the acutest and most genial of modern critics ventures to rank Bishop Wilson among the four chief names of the English Church. "Hooker," he says, "is great, by having signally and above others the sense in religion of history and historic development. Butler is great, by having the sense of philosophy; Barrow, by having that of morals; Wilson, that of practical

* "Debemus legere simplices et devotos libros, sicut altos et profundos."—'Imit. Christi,' i. 5.

Christianity."* We may sum up in one word the excellence of Wilson by saying that, to a pre-eminent degree, he received the kingdom of God as a little child.

3. But another source of his power—if, indeed, it be not the same under another aspect—lay in the ἦθος of the man,—in the deep moral impression which he made on his hearers.† "His style," said Mr. Moore, in his Funeral Sermon, "is adapted to the capacity of all degrees of men: at the same time he delivered his sentiments with all the dignity and authority of an inspired Apostle." Even when the sermon was poorest, the speaker was a Saint of God. The lips of such a man, even if he be—as Wilson was not—of stammering tongue, will speak wisdom. There were many good men in Wilson's, as in every age, whose lives have been all the more unnoticed because they were hid with Christ in God; but a Saint is one who makes his religion, absolutely and

* Matthew Arnold's 'Lit. and Dogma,' p. xx. Elsewhere he attributes to him a balance of the four qualities of ardour, unction, downright honesty, and plain good sense, which might have resulted in a prosaic religion held fanatically, but which he possessed in a fulness and perfection which made this untoward result impossible—"his unction is so perfect, and in such happy alliance with his good sense, that it becomes tenderness and fervent charity; his good sense is so perfect and in such happy alliance with his unction that it becomes moderation and insight."—'Culture and Anarchy,' p. vii.

† "Sermons, though never so good, are not always understood or minded by common people; but a good, a sober, a pious life and example, is a language that everybody understands."—Wilson's 'Sermons,' lxxxix.

inflexibly, and in ways little familiar to his generation, the rule of his whole life; and who, with a perfect absence of all self-consciousness, does this in such a manner as to seize the imagination and influence the character of his own and of other generations. Berkeley and Butler were men of pre-eminent goodness, and men of a thousand times the ability of Ken and Wilson; yet we do think of Ken and Wilson, and we do not think of Berkeley and Butler, as saints of God. Living in an age in which sensuality had eaten like a cancer into the heart of society, Wilson left on all men the impression of serene and stainless purity. Living in an age of greed and worldliness, he chose the lot of self-denying poverty and voluntary retirement. And so behind the Sermons stood the man. We who only read those Sermons cannot fairly judge of them. Men can listen to much which they would find it tedious to peruse in print; and he, for instance, who can only judge of Whitfield by his published remains, can form no conception of the thrilling effect produced by his impassioned oratory.

> "See God's ambassador in pulpit stand
> Where they could take note from his look and hand,
> And from his speaking action bear away
> More sermon than our preachers use to say."

And when we find in Wilson's Sermons the simplest truths of faith and morality set forth with entire sincerity, in language plain, but reverent, and void of every tinge of Pharisaism; when we know that

his life and his words were in perfect accord; when we recall in imagination the forehead whereon the Lamb had set his seal; the calm dignity of bearing—the flowing silver hair—the comely and benevolent aspect—the sweet and reverent voice—the saintly and venerable figure—we can well imagine that none could listen to exhortations such as his—so faithful, so intelligible, so practical, so scriptural—without being the better and wiser for them.

> "At church with meek and unaffected grace
> His looks adorned the venerable place;
> Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,
> And fools who came to scoff remained to pray."

And, if many of our great divines have risen to loftier heights of ability; have left behind them more immortal utterances; have swayed more potently the hearts of multitudes; have shed more light upon the great problems of religion; have fired with a more ardent enthusiasm the love of virtue;—yet the life and example of Wilson are a heritage more precious than eloquent words. And so long as the spirit of religion has any influence upon mankind (and that surely will be so long as man is man), so long will his calm good sense, his practical wisdom, his perfect consistency, his sober-minded gentleness—in one word, the holiness of his character, as preserved for us by a warm and loving memorial,—furnish us with a worthy object of love and imitation in this true servant of the Lord Jesus—THOMAS WILSON, THE SAINTLY PREACHER.

BUTLER,

THE ETHICAL PREACHER.

SERMONS *by the Right Reverend Father in God,* JOSEPH BUTLER, D.C.L., *late Lord Bishop of Durham.* A New Edition. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press. MDCCCXXVI.

Professor Mozley, Bishop Butler's modern representative—Was Butler a preacher?—The essentials of preaching—How both Paley (in his 'Natural Theology') and Butler are preachers—Deficiency of evangelical reference in Butler's Sermons, and the reason of it—No argument against his personal faith in Christ—His Sermons not only evidential, but also indicative of the line of human duty—His style needs to be popularised—His Sermons may be regarded as masterly expositions of certain great truths of Holy Scripture—(1) They show that human nature was made originally in God's image—The consistency of benevolence with reasonable self-love in the Divine Mind—All the moral attributes of God resolvable into love—Exhibition of benevolence and self-love in the Passion of Our Lord—Christ exemplifies the indignation against moral evil, which Butler intimates to be part of a perfect character—(2) Butler illustrates the text that man is "fearfully and wonderfully made"—The appetites and affections—Vicious affections only excesses and morbid developements of innocent ones—Self-love and benevolence—The conscience regarded by Butler rather as an eye than a light—How Butler's theory of human nature may assist us in self-examination and self-discipline—and show the mistake of a morbid pietism—and give the sound and healthy view of resentment—(3) Butler's

view of the corruption of human nature—The deceitfulness of the heart analysed and exhibited in the Sermons on the Character of Balaam, and on Self-deceit—Revelation adds to the description of the effects of the Fall, which may be gathered from reason, this further particular, that man's faith was disabled by it—Combination in man of gratification of present passion with faith in a foreseen future would have been a topic worthy of Butler—Identity of what is called Faith in the language of Revelation with what Butler would call Reason—Gen. iii. furnishes the explanation of the moral convulsion of which Butler finds such evident traces in our nature.

A VOLUME of Sermons, published in the course of last year,—probably, in knowledge of the human heart and analysis of human motives, one of the two greatest contributions to religious literature which the nineteenth century has made,*—recalls to us the ethical discourse which has too much gone out of late, and of which Butler's Sermons are the great model and archetype. Joseph Butler, Bishop and Prince Palatine of Durham, is not dead; or rather, "he being dead, yet speaketh" in the pages of Professor Mozley. The Professor's great discourses on "The peaceful temper" and on "Our duty towards equals," and his method of showing how war is bound up in that distinction of the human race into nations, which is part of the present system of things, are conceived in Butler's happiest vein, and differ from his Sermons chiefly in being much easier reading, and couched in a style far less ponderous.

* The other being the Sermons of the Rev. John Henry Newman, late Vicar of St. Mary-the-Virgin's, Oxford. *Qui cum talis sit utinam noster adhuc esset.*

But ethical Sermons generally give rise in some minds to a question, the answer to which will throw light upon the true character of preaching, and may be given, we think, quite suitably from the pulpit, without any blinking of the sacred objects which should be paramount there. That Bishop Butler was a profound religious thinker, and a great moral philosopher, will be admitted on all hands. But there are many who would demur to his claim to rank among great preachers. No doubt he wrote discourses, which he entitled Sermons, and which were delivered from the pulpit. These, however, are but the accidents and accessories of preaching; and before any person's claims to be a preacher can be satisfactorily made out, it must be shown that his discourses are *essentially* sermons, sermons in something more than the name. In attempting to do this for Bishop Butler, we shall gain an insight into the distinguishing character of his preaching.

Every one understands what is meant when a sermon and an expository lecture are spoken of as distinct. But it is doubtful whether the terms employed represent the real and essential distinction between the things.* All preaching is, or ought to

* Probably the more correct definition would be to call the sermon an exposition of a single detached passage of Holy Scripture, the lecture an exposition of an entire context with all the sequences of thought which link text to text. In the first

be, expository; that is, it ought to be an exposition or setting forth of some part of the Word of God. If any discourse is not this, it is not preaching. And, conversely, if any part of the Word of God, whether promise or precept, warning or consolation, forms the subject of a discourse, it is properly called a sermon, and the person delivering it is a preacher. But in this definition the expression, "the word of God," must be understood in its full legitimate breadth of meaning. There is a word of God, for those who have ears to hear it, in Nature as well as in Revelation,—a word not by any means so explicit as Holy Scripture, but yet which serves sufficiently, as St. Paul tells us, to render those "without excuse" * who do not heed it; the word of which the Psalmist speaks, when he says,† "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard." Now these works of God, whereby His "eternal power and godhead"‡ are understood among men, are not merely—and one may say not chiefly—outside us. The noblest work of God is man himself. Man's

there is more or less unity of thought; in the second there is no other unity than that which is given by tracing the stages of the argument, if the passage is argumentative, or the development of the narrative, if it be historical.

* See Rom. i. 20.

† Psalm xix. 1, 2, 3.

‡ See Rom. i. 20.

mental and moral anatomy, and its adaptation to his circumstances and surroundings, bears a stronger testimony to the Creator's power, wisdom, and goodness, than even the architecture of the heavens or the structure of animals. The expounders, therefore, of the works of God, seeing that His works are a true revelation of Himself, though dimmer and less explicit than His word, may rightfully, if only they point upwards continually from the creature to the Creator, claim the title of great preachers. Paley, in his 'Natural Theology,' is a great preacher, his object being to discover and disclose the traces of an intelligent and benevolent Creator, which are scattered so thick over the whole realm of nature. And not less surely—rather much more—is Butler a magnificent preacher, whose Sermons discuss and expound that great subject, which the Apostle lays down * as the foundation-stone of his argument on the justifying efficacy of faith, the law "written in the heart," and the "witness" of conscience. Hence comes the deficiency of evangelical reference, or rather of reference to revealed religion, in these Sermons, a fact which is patent upon the surface of them,† and which to

* See Rom. ii. 15.

† A remarkable instance of this absence of reference to Holy Scripture is to be found in Sermon IX. ("Upon Forgiveness of Injuries"), where the moral ground of capital punishment is thus stated: "What justifies public executions is, not that the guilt or demerit of the criminal

superficial readers, possessed with the conventional notion of what a sermon is or ought to be, forms no inconsiderable stumbling-block. Even where one would most naturally look for them, evangelical allusions are, if I may so say, studiously avoided. Thus the two great Sermons "Upon the Love of God," that is, on our love towards Him, do not even incidentally and in passing refer to that love of God towards us, which is the great inducing motive of our love to Him, according to that word of the Evangelist,* "We love him, because he first loved us." While recognising the goodness of God *generally* as that which "ought and has a natural tendency to beget in us the affection of gratitude," † he is silent as to that great exhibition of Divine

dispenses with the obligation of good-will, neither would this justify any severity; but that his life is inconsistent with the quiet and happiness of the world: that is, a general and more enlarged obligation necessarily destroys a particular and more confined one of the same kind, inconsistent with it" (p. 145). As far as any mischief goes, *which the culprit himself might hereafter do*, the world would be sufficiently secured against it by his perpetual imprisonment. Hence what Butler must have meant is that, unless the extreme penalty were exacted from the criminal, there would be no sufficient deterrent against crimes of the same order. But what we wish to draw attention to is the entire omission of any reference to the Divine authorization of capital punishment as inflicted by the magistrate, both in the Noachic precept (Gen. ix. 6), and in the New Testament, where the capital punishment is not restricted to the offence of blood-shedding (Rom. xiii. 4). "The sword" placed in the hand of the civil magistrate was a symbol of his being invested with the power of life and death.

* 1 John iv. 19.

† Serm. XIII. p. 241.

goodness, the gift of God's Son for and to sinners, the comfortable pledge to us, as the Apostle teaches,* of His readiness to bestow all lower and lesser gifts. It is almost as if, in saying the General Thanksgiving, a man should stop short after the words, "We bless Thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life," and should drop all the subsequent mention of the "inestimable love" manifested in redemption, of the "means of grace," and of "the hope of glory."

The omission is far too strongly marked to be attributed to aught else but deliberate design. Butler intended his treatment of the love of God to be, like the rest of his Sermons, purely and exclusively moral. "Then why," it might be asked, "take up such a subject at all? Why not let the Sermons 'Upon Human Nature,' 'The Government of the Tongue,' and other purely moral subjects, stand alone, without intruding into the domain of Theology by a disquisition upon the love of God?" The answer is, that it is assumed throughout the Sermons that the being and attributes of God are recognisable by the light of reason and conscience,†

* See Rom. viii. 32.

† See Serm. I. p. 11, where he mentions certain "instances of our Maker's care and love both of the individual and the species;" Serm. II. p. 26, "Instincts by which they" [brutes] "are carried on to the end the Author of their nature intended them for;" Serm. III. p. 42, "It is evident that, exclusive of revelation, man cannot be considered as a creature left by his Maker to act at random;" Serm. IV. p. 58, "The good Author of our nature designed us not only

quite apart from the more brilliant light which revealed religion sheds upon them. Butler will not avail himself, in the smallest degree, of that more brilliant light. His design is to show that the morality of the Gospel, which turns upon the two principal pivots of the love of God and the love of our neighbour, is indicated in the structure of human nature, when it is closely analysed. If the heart of man, truly read and interpreted, is found to make a most distinct and intelligent echo to the twofold precept of the love of God and of our neighbour, that furnishes a very strong presumption that this summary of morality is from the Author of our

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necessaries, but also enjoyment and satisfaction;" Serm. XIV. p. 243, "Our reason convinces us that God is present with us, and we see and feel the effects of his goodness;" *ibid.* p. 252, "Since the supreme Mind, the Author and Cause of all things, is the highest possible object to himself, he may be an adequate supply to all the faculties of our souls;"—and the Sermons "upon the Love of God" *passim.*

It will be remembered that the great religious controversy of Butler's days was *with the Deists* (Collins, Toland, Tindal, Chubb, &c.) who admitted the being and attributes of God. Mr. Leslie Stephen, in his 'History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century' [London, 1876], seems to think the lucubrations of the Deists one of the most important factors in the serious thought of that age. An able paper in the 'Quarterly Review' for April 1877, calls in question the importance of the Deistical speculations then so rife; but of course these speculations must have been constantly present to the theologians of the day; and when they wrote controversially or apologetically, they would feel that by the greater part of the religious thinkers of the day no objection would be made to their assuming as true the first paragraph of the Apostles' Creed, however prevalent might be the scepticism respecting the second and third.

nature. It is an *independent* testimony to Gospel morality which Butler is seeking to elicit from his researches into the human heart; and in order to do this, he is bound to refrain from advancing any truth of revealed religion, which natural religion does not of itself establish. Thus his argument demanded the banishment of evangelical topics. But let us not do this great and good divine the crying injustice of supposing that such topics did not sit very near his heart. The prelate who, in compliance with his own principle of the benefit accruing from public expressions of faith,* set up in that cold and rationalizing age the emblem of our redemption in the chapel of his palace at Bristol, and was defamed and vilified as a Papist† in consequence, as many smaller men than he have been since his day on no better or more reasonable ground, can never have been wanting in appreciation of that redemption, which was wrought upon the cross, and of which the cross is the symbol.

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* "Your chief business, therefore, is to endeavour to beget a practical sense of it" [religion] "upon their hearts . . . . And this is to be done by keeping up, as we are able, the form and face of religion with decency and reverence, and in such a degree as to bring the thoughts of religion often to their minds. . . . External acts of piety and devotion, and the frequent returns of them, are necessary, to keep up a sense of religion, which the affairs of the world will otherwise wear out of men's hearts." (Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of Durham, in the year MDCCLI., pp. 434, 430.)

† See the Biographical Sketch appended to this Lecture.

Following in the line of thought which has been thus opened, we will first speak of these Sermons in their more obvious character as evidential, and then regard them as expositions of certain great and fundamental truths of Holy Scripture.

I. And in speaking of them as evidential, our first observation is that they are something more than evidential, that the same argument which serves the purpose of confuting selfish and sceptical theories, is made to serve equally well the moral purpose of enforcing duty upon the professed believer. A little above a parallel was drawn between Paley and Butler, as being both of them expositors of that lower revelation which God has made of Himself in the works of nature—Paley dealing with the works which lie around and outside of man, Butler with man himself, the noblest of the works. But if Paley may, in regard of his 'Natural Theology,' be justly regarded as a great preacher, how much stronger a claim has Butler to the title! The various instances of design and adaptation which Paley alleges in his work, and which instances might be augmented to almost any extent, the design in the eye* of the cat, in the

* "The *eyes* of animals which follow their prey by night, as cats, owls, &c., possess a faculty not given to those of other species, namely, of closing the pupil *entirely*. The final cause of which seems to be this. It was necessary for such animals to be able to descry objects with very small degrees of light. This capacity

tongue,* of the woodpecker, in the foot† of the water-

depended upon the superior sensibility of the retina; that is, upon its being affected by the most feeble impulses. But that tenderness of structure which rendered the membrane thus exquisitely sensible, rendered it also liable to be offended by the access of stronger degrees of light. The contractile range therefore of the pupil is increased in these animals, so as to enable them to close the aperture entirely, which includes the power of diminishing it in every degree; whereby at all times such portions, and only such portions, of light are admitted as may be received without injury to the sense." (Paley's 'Natural Theology;' London, 1802; chap. xii. p. 257.)

* "The *tongue of the woodpecker* is one of those singularities which nature presents us with, when a singular purpose is to be answered. It is a particular instrument for a particular use; and what else but design ever produces such? The woodpecker lives chiefly upon insects, lodged in the bodies of decayed or decaying trees. For the purpose of boring into the wood, it is furnished with a bill, straight, hard, angular, and sharp. When, by means of this piercer, it has reached the cells of the insects, then comes the office of its tongue; which tongue is, first, of such a length that the bird can dart it out three or four inches from the bill, in this respect differing greatly from every other species of bird; in the second place, it is tipped with a stiff, sharp, bony thorn; and, in the third place, which appears to me the most remarkable property of all, this tip is dentated on both sides, like the beard of an arrow or the barb of a hook. The description of the part declares its use. The bird, having exposed the retreats of the insects by the assistance of its bill, with a motion inconceivably quick launches out at them with this long tongue; transfixes them upon the barbed needle at the end of it; and thus draws its prey within its mouth. If this be not mechanism, what is? Should it be said, that, by continual endeavours to shoot out the tongue to the stretch, the woodpecker species may by degrees have lengthened the organ itself, beyond that of other birds, what account can be given of its form, of its tip? How, in particular, did it get its barbs, its dentation? These barbs, in my opinion, wherever they occur, are decisive proofs of mechanical contrivance." ('Natural Theology,' chap. xiii. 268–270.)

† "If it were our intention to

fowl, in the lamp* of the glow-worm, of what are they evidences? Clearly of the intelligence and beneficence of the great Creator, and nothing more.

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pursue the consideration further, I should take in that generic distinction among birds, the *web-foot* of water-fowl. It is an instance which may be pointed out to a child. The utility of the web to water-fowl, the inutility to land-fowl, are so obvious, that it seems impossible to notice the difference without acknowledging the design. I am at a loss to know how those who deny the agency of an intelligent Creator dispose of this example. There is nothing in the action of swimming, as carried on by a bird upon the surface of the water, that should generate a membrane between the toes. As to that membrane, it is an exercise of constant resistance. The only supposition I can think of is, that all birds have been originally water-fowl and web-footed; that sparrows, hawks, linnets, &c., which frequent the land, have, in process of time, and in the course of many generations, had this part worn away by treading upon hard ground. To such evasive assumptions must atheism always have recourse; and, after all, it confesses that the structure of the feet of birds, in their original form, was critically adapted to their original destination." ('Natural Theology,' chap. xii. pp. 255, 256.)

* "If the reader, looking to our distributions of science, wish to contemplate the chemistry, as well as the mechanism of nature, the insect creation will afford him an example. I refer to the light in the tail of a *glow-worm*. Two points seem to be agreed upon by naturalists concerning it: first, that it is phosphoric; secondly, that its use is to attract the male insect. The only thing to be inquired after is the singularity, if any such there be, in the natural history of this animal, which should render a provision of this kind more necessary for it than for other insects. That singularity seems to be the difference which subsists between the male and the female, which difference is greater than what we find in any other species of animal whatever. The glow-worm is a female *caterpillar*, the male of which is a *fly*, lively, comparatively small, dissimilar to the female in appearance, probably also as distinguished from her in habits, pursuits, and manners, as he is unlike in form and external constitution. Here, then, is the adversity of the case. The caterpillar cannot meet her

Paley's argument stands clear altogether of human duty, yields no indications of what man's character and conduct should be, unless, indeed, it be the inference that to a Being so wise, so powerful, so good, man owes adoration, praise, and gratitude. But not so Butler's argument on the internal economy of the human heart. When he vindicates a place among the principles of our nature for bene-

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companion in the air. The winged rover disdains the ground. They might never, therefore, be brought together, did not this radiant torch direct the volatile mate to his sedentary female." ('Works of W. Paley, D.D.' London: 1821. Vol. iv. p. 263.)

Of course in thus citing Paley, whose works (like those of Butler himself) it is now the fashion ungenerously to depreciate, I am not ignorant that it will be objected that the argument from final causes has had its day, and is going out, and that to appeal to it, when it is on the wane, is just to ignore the discoveries made (or alleged to be made) by modern *savants*. But my firm persuasion is that no attempt (however subtle and ingenious) permanently to supplant the argument from design will succeed in the long run, or *take hold of the public mind. It is rooted in the common-sense of mankind;* and though a few philosophers (or would-be philosophers) will from time to time find an agreeable diversion in criticising and picking holes in it, it will crop up again after they have left the scene, and by its vitality defy its assailants. We may safely challenge any one to succeed in persuading the great majority of men that where there is a complete and curious adaptation of any natural object to a certain end, it is not due to an intelligent design in a constructive Mind, but only to the operation of a natural instinct in the object itself. Let *savants* say what they please to throw doubt upon this; their speculations will *all go for nothing in the long run.* Or rather, perhaps, men will make upon them the reflection which Butler makes upon the subject of certain fantastic *moral* theories: "Persons of superior capacity and improvement have often fallen into errors, which no one of mere common understanding could." (Serm. V. p. 84.)

volence or good-will towards our neighbour—a principle which rests in our neighbour's happiness as its end—and shows that because this "benevolence, though natural in man to man, yet is in a very low degree, kept down by interest and competitions; and men, for the most part, are so engaged in the business and pleasures of the world, as to overlook and turn away from objects of misery;" therefore compassion is also given us, to back up benevolence in case of the distressed, "to gain the unhappy admittance and access, and to make their case attended to;" when he points out the correspondence of compassion with our circumstances as placed in a world of sorrow, and where men have much more power of doing mischief to one another than good; when he scatters to the winds the over-subtle theories of the selfish philosophers, that benevolence is nothing more than delight in the exercise of power, and compassion nothing more than fear for ourselves in disguise,—he not only brings evidence to the wisdom and beneficence of the Creator, but also elicits from our nature an independent testimony to the morality of the Gospel, which is said in various parts of Holy Scripture to be all summed up in love. And this indication of the path in which our nature, as well as Scripture, indicates that our duty lies, passes in Butler's hands into an admonition to walk in that path, into a plain pressing home of duty upon the conscience. So that besides finding footsteps of the

Creator in the structure of the mind, we find also footsteps for our own conduct in daily life, and footsteps in which the preacher exhorts us to plant our feet. And this is what Butler himself says in the following passage, which is quite in his own terse and solid manner:—"As all observations of final causes, drawn from the principles of action in the heart of man, compared with the condition he is placed in, serve all the good uses which instances of final causes in the material world about us do; and both these are equally proofs of wisdom and design in the Author of nature: so the former serve to further good purposes; they show us what course of life we are made for, what is our duty, and in a peculiar manner enforce upon us the practice of it."*

Before taking leave of this part of the subject, it may be allowable to express the wish that Butler's Sermons, considered as a great argument, not only in favour of the wisdom and beneficence of the Creator, but also in corroboration of Christian morality, should be recast by some competent person, and reproduced with amplifications and additions in a popular form. Butler's style, though it has a massive grandeur and solidity in it—the just expression of the author's mind, and dear, if it were only as a memorial of him, to those who owe him an intellectual and moral debt of gratitude—is yet any-

* Serm. VI., "Upon Compassion," p. 87.

thing but attractive to the general reader. The weighty thoughts are too tersely enunciated; and though here and there an almost grim stroke of sarcastic humour * lights up the page, there is very little light beyond this. It is probable that from the fact of the mass of men being so outward, so little apt to reflect upon themselves and the processes of their own minds, Butler's 'Natural Morality' (if we may so term it) could never be made as interesting to the many as Paley's 'Natural Theology.' But we cannot but think that something might be done towards the popularising of so important an apologetic work by one who had first himself obtained an insight into, and a thorough grasp of the argument. The Sermons want cohesion and method; they are all rather essays towards a great moral theory than the orderly development of one. And

* The 'Quarterly' reviewer of Mr. Leslie Stephen's book on 'English Thought in the Eighteenth Century,' is "disposed to think that the chief characteristic of the century was its power of humour," a power which, he says, took a different shape in Addison and Swift, but was a feature common to the minds of both of them. Certainly every now and then humour oozes out in Butler, as, for example, where he is about to consider whether self-love "may not possibly be so prevalent as to disappoint itself, and even contradict its own end," he prefaces the discussion thus: "These inquiries, it is hoped, will be favourably attended to; for there shall be all possible concessions made to the favourite passion, which hath so much allowed to it, and whose cause is so universally pleaded: it shall be *treated with the utmost tenderness and concern for its interests.*" We think his humour was rather of Swift's type, with a dash of melancholy and cynicism in it, only tempered and chastened in Butler by devotion and sobriety of mind.

this might at least be redressed. What a treatise might have been added to the apologetic literature of the Church, had such a writer as Archbishop Whately recast in his own mind the argument of these grand Sermons, and expressed it with his own luminousness and perspicuity!

II. But it is quite possible to bring these Sermons strictly under the category of Sermons by regarding them as masterly expositions of certain great truths of Holy Scripture.

(1.) And first of that statement, which stands at the head of the inspired history of the human race: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness . . ... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him."* That Butler himself regarded his studies of Human Nature in this light, although he nowhere professes a formal exposition of the text just quoted, is evident from the following observations, which are made incidentally. After a powerful discourse upon Resentment, in which he vindicates for that passion its place and functions in the moral system, shows, *e.g.*, that it is a "balance to the weakness of pity," which, if not thus held in check, would render the execution of justice upon criminals "exceedingly difficult and uneasy,"—he concludes with this reflection: "Men may speak of the degeneracy and corruption of the world, according to the experience

* Gen. i. 26, 27.

they have had of it; but human nature, considered as the Divine workmanship, should methinks be treated as sacred: for *in the image of God made He man.*" And in a long note to his first Sermon, having exposed the unsoundness of Hobbes's theory that every appearance of good-will and benevolence which presents itself in human nature, is resolvable into the love of power, and delight in the exercise of it, he adds: "These are the absurdities which even men of capacity run into, when they have occasion to belie their nature, and will perversely disclaim that image of God which was originally stamped upon it, the traces of which, however faint, are plainly discernible upon the mind of man." Butler's method of treating this great subject cannot be thoroughly understood without considering the way in which he was led to it. It is to be remembered that he found a selfish theory of morals exclusively in possession of the field of thought, a theory which it was fashionable for the sceptical fops of the reign of George II. to affect, and which gave them a convenient plea for their own cynical Epicureanism, and for disregarding the interests and feelings of their neighbour to any extent. "Vain, luxurious, and selfish effeminacy," says a contemporary,* "was the

* Brown, in his "Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times" (published in 1757), as quoted in the 'Quarterly Review' for April 1877, "English Thought in the Eighteenth Century," p. 410.

chief character of the age," and it was built upon an erroneous philosophy which derived its whole prestige from having been broached by Hobbes and other writers, whose views it was accounted a mark of advanced intelligence and higher cultivation to adopt. "Vices and follies have their turns," says Butler, "and the distinctive vice and folly of the present day is to profess a contracted spirit, and greater regards to self-interest than appears to have been done formerly." And again, in his Preface: "There is a strange affectation in many people of explaining away all particular affections, and representing the whole of life as nothing but one continued exercise of self-love." Now Butler's enterprise was to explode the false theory under which the selfishness and cynical indifference of his age veiled itself, to vindicate human nature from the calumnies which this theory put upon it, and to show, without the aid of Revelation, from a simple and not over subtle analysis of it, that it was made originally in the image of God. This, we conceive, he has done triumphantly, in such a way as to set the question at once and for ever at rest. And what, it may be asked, are the traces of this image of God as discovered in human nature? "We have no clear conception," says Butler, "of any positive moral attribute in the Supreme Being but what resolves itself up into goodness" or benevolence. Now it is just the natural feeling of benevolence, the existence

of which in man's heart had been called in question by the selfish philosophy of Butler's day. It is therefore this point which he labours to establish, showing the reality of the feeling, and the impossibility of resolving it, without coming to an absurdity, into any form of self-love, and pointing out how the gratification of it is so far from being inconsistent with self-love, that it is one of the highest and purest enjoyments known to us; how, in order to secure it from being ousted by competition from other principles, it is subsidised and seconded by compassion; and how conscience, in the survey of our actions, reflects with complacency upon those done from its promptings, and sets upon benevolence the seal of its approval. Now we are distinctly told—in the Scriptures—told twice over by way of emphasizing an assertion of such paramount importance, that "God is love."* And we know also (the whole Bible from beginning to end is a gradual unfolding of the great truth) that when sin made its entrance into the world, and blighted the hearts and hopes of men, this love of God took the aspect of compassion or mercy towards the sinner. The Gospel in all its provisions, whether for the acceptance of man with God, or for his renewal after the image of Him who created him, is a scheme of Divine mercy. And yet we are constantly assured that this scheme con-

* 1 John iv. 8, 16.

tributes, as no other arrangement could have done, to God's own glory, and that the hallowing of His name—the universal acknowledgment of Him on the part of all His rational creatures as a most tender Father, who yet loves His children too well and wisely to suffer sin upon them—is the end of ends which is to be pursued by all His rational creatures, both in prayer and endeavour, and which therefore must be an end with Himself. And the trace of this in the moral economy of man is what Butler has so thoughtfully and carefully pointed out; the perfect consistency of benevolence with reasonable self-love, which last he fully admits (and indeed asserts) to be one of the higher principles of our nature, and a principle by which, according to the constitution of that nature, we cannot but be, and ought to be, strongly influenced. There is this consistency also in the Divine Mind. The Heavenly Father finds His greatest delight and blessedness, His glory and His joy, in re-admitting sinners to full communion with Himself, through that Mediator whose precious work of atonement proclaims His holiness, and justice, and truth, with no less emphasis than His long-suffering, His mercy, and His love.

I say His holiness, and justice, and truth; for when Butler says that "we have no clear conception of any positive moral attribute in the Supreme Being, but what may be resolved up into goodness," we must take him as meaning exactly what he says;

not that there are no other features in the Divine character but goodness, but that all its other features are resolvable into this. "God is love;" but He is light, and truth, and holiness, and justice, yea, and moral indignation also: only none of these attributes is so fundamental as love—each of them is ultimately resolvable into love. Sunlight is found, when analysed, to comprise sombre as well as bright rays—indigo, blue, and violet, as well as red, yellow, orange and green; the indigo ray is an element in the light no less than the yellow. The remissness of a government in punishing obstinate and hardened criminals, the letting such characters loose upon society, and putting the lives and properties of the innocent at their disposal, would not be benevolence or love to the public,—would not be care for the general good, but the reverse. And on the other hand, the making an example of offenders, and visiting them with condign punishment, though it does not bear the aspect of love to them, yet does not imply the least ill-will to them, and is clearly enough resolvable into benevolence to the public and care for the general good. Butler shows that "when benevolence is said," in the Scriptures, "to be the sum of virtue, it is not spoken of as a blind propension, but as a principle in reasonable creatures, and so to be directed by their reason," in order that it may attain its end, which end he points out as being not always the avoiding of inconvenience to indivi-

duals, or even classes, but "the greatest public good."—It may be added that truth also,—though, like any one of the seven prismatic rays in light, it may be looked at separately and distinctly, and must be so by creatures like ourselves, whose minds must take a subject to pieces in order to comprehend it,—is yet resolvable into love or goodness. Suppose a man, either by words or his method of action, to raise expectations in the minds of others which his conduct towards them entirely disappoints, is that goodness or the reverse?* The Scribes and Pharisees were men whose whole life was a lie, who cloaked a worldly heart under the appearance of piety—they "for a pretence made long prayers." And side by side with this feature of character, this want of truth, was a want of love which was the radical or fundamental vice in them; "they devoured widows' houses."

The sum of what has been said above is, that as love embraces all the perfections of the Divine nature, so also benevolence, or the love of our neighbour, embraces the whole compass of human duty, according to that saying of the Apostle's, which forms the text of Butler's two sermons upon the love

* Professor Mozley, in his recent volume of 'Lectures on the Old Testament' ("Relation of Jael's act to the morality of her age"), brings out most forcibly the connexion of truth with love, in commenting upon the Apostle's words (Eph. iv. 25), "Putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for *we are members one of another.*" Truth is a *part* of our duty to our neighbour. Our whole duty to him is love.

of our neighbour: "And if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." *

Before passing on, we may pause to make an obvious suggestion, which opens a wide field for useful and edifying thought. What the various attributes of the Divine Being are in themselves is a problem which, as being high above out of our reach, we should, from a feeling of reverence, and under a consciousness of our own utter ignorance, decline all attempt to solve. The Holy Scriptures, accommodating themselves to our understanding and condition, speak of the Almighty as moved by compassion, anger, sorrow, joy, repentance, and other emotions in our nature; and our wisdom is to take these expressions with all the simplicity of children, and act in conformity with the representations thus given to us of the character of Him with whom we have to do. That such representations are not mere figures of speech, that there is something underlying them, of which the terms expressive of human passions are the correct exponents to our minds, is clear from the circumstance that, when God took flesh "and was made man," He assumed all human affections, and through the medium of those affections exhibited to us the image of the invisible God. Highly interest-

* Rom. xiii. 9.

ing and profitable it will be then to take Butler's original draught of human nature, and to mark how it corresponds in every particular with this image of God exhibited to us under four different points of view in the evangelical narrative. It would detain us far too long to go into particulars; but two points I may briefly throw out for further development in meditation: first, the natural shrinking of our blessed Lord from mental and bodily suffering, even to the deprecation of it, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" * and yet the entire and cheerful resignation with which He at length accepted the cup, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."† What is the first of these but the action of fear, seconded by self-love, in the sinless humanity of our Blessed Lord,—a self-love which naturally declines pain, both bodily and mental, and all the more sensitively on account of the purity of the nature in which it exists,—a self-love which is the negation of stoicism, no less than of weak succumbing to calamity? And what is the second, but an exercise by Christ of that resignation to the will of God, in which Butler finds the three elements of fear, hope, and love, and of which he says that it "is the whole of piety," and "includes in it all that is good;" and also an exercise of that

* St. Matt. xxvi. 39. † St. Matt. xxvi. 42.

benevolence and compassion, the claims of which to govern our nature he has so grandly advocated, and which redounded to the gratification of the Saviour's own heart, when he saw of the travail of His soul, and was satisfied. It was the love of God and the love of His neighbour, which urged Him not to be influenced by sensibility to present suffering (however keen), but to endure the cross for the joy that was set before Him. This joy was a satisfaction to reasonable self-love, which He must perforce have fallen short of, had He declined the cup. And again, as to resentment, the real object of which, Butler tells us, is "not natural but moral evil," not suffering but injury, and the indulgence of which in a measure, and as moral indignation against wrong-doing, he so conclusively justifies, and points out the use of,—who does not see that the inspired accounts of our blessed Lord's character bear out entirely all that he says on the subject; for while Christ is not only the gift, but the impersonation, of Divine love and mercy, are we not told of "the wrath of the Lamb," and did not His wrath break out with special warmth—never, indeed, against personal outrage, however insulting and cruel, but against hypocrisy and empty shows of piety, in which the heart had no part—and did it not culminate in that tremendous denunciation, which yet consisted with strong and compassionate yearning over the souls both of the blind guides and those who were led by them: "Ye

serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"*

(2). Another passage of Holy Scripture, which Butler in his Sermons works out, though he does not use it formally as a text, is the 14th verse of the 139th Psalm: "I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well." It is clear from the context that the uppermost thought in the mind of the Psalmist was the curious structure of the human body, and the gradual building up of the members into one organism. A passage in the Epistle to the Romans,† in which the Apostle borrows an illustration of his subject from the bodily organism of man, stands at the head of Butler's first Sermon, and this is the way in which he accommodates it to the purpose of his argument: "Since the Apostle speaks of the several members as having distinct offices, which implies the mind, it cannot be thought an allowable liberty, instead of the *body* and *its members*, to substitute the *whole nature of man*, and *all the variety of internal principles which belong to it.*" The truth is that the outward is but a symbol and type of the inward; and when the Holy Spirit, who spake by the Psalmist, moved him to say that he was "fearfully and wonderfully made," He doubtless had in view no less the intellectual and moral

* St. Matt. xxiii. 33. † Rom. xii. 4, 5.

economy of man than his outward bodily structure. And it is this intellectual and moral œconomy which Butler in his Sermons so skilfully lays open and interprets; he takes the dissecting knife in hand, and shows us by a study of our moral structure both what we are intended by our Creator to be, and what, alas! we are. A brief and rapid *resumé* of his results may here be in place.

Human nature is a complex of various principles, which, like the various orders of men in a body politic, not only have different functions to discharge, but are of different ranks, high and low, legislators and artisans, governors and governed. The lowest of the people in this commonwealth are those appetites and instincts, not worthy of being called affections, which man shares in common with the beasts that perish. Of a superior rank to these, as owning the sway of reason, and capable of being controlled by it, are the passions and affections, fear, hope, compassion, resentment, and the rest. Of these there is not one which, apart from its excesses, abuses, and perversions, is not good—not one which is without its proper function, and which does not contribute, by fulfilling that function, to the health and vigour of the general system. Are there not then affections, it may be asked, which are in themselves vicious, and which a good man must set himself altogether to eradicate? "Undoubtedly," Butler would answer (if we may

venture to put words in his mouth), "there are many wrong and criminal feelings in our hearts, which we are bound to suppress, and to which no quarter must be given; but if you will philosophically analyse these, you will find that each of them is the morbid excess, the undue and exaggerated development, sometimes the monstrous caricature, of an affection which, as it stood in our nature originally when it came fresh from the hands of the Creator, was perfectly innocent, holy, and good, and adapted to the condition and circumstances of man." What can be more criminal, or more mischievous, than lust, as it is ordinarily exhibited in human life? what can be more essentially cruel than it is, or, as Burns says, more hardening to all within, and petrifying to the feeling?* Yet the instinct, of which the crime is a perversion, is, of course, designed for, and essential to, the continuance of the species, and, in the ordinance of holy matrimony, receives the authorization and consecration of the most High. Is it possible to conceive that this could be the case if it were in itself, apart from its misdirection, perversion, and excesses, wrong? But resentment is the great instance by

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"I wave the quantum o' the sin,
The hazard of concealing;
But och! it hardens a' within,
And petrifies the feeling."
Epistle to a Young Friend.

which Butler illustrates his principle that "no passion which God hath endued us with can be of itself evil; and yet" that "men frequently indulge a passion in such ways and degrees that at length it becomes quite another thing from what it was originally in our nature."* He shows that what raises deliberate resentment, the object upon which it fastens, is injury and wrong, whether to ourselves or others; that "to prevent and remedy such injury, and the miseries arising from it, is the end for which" it "was implanted in man;" that "fear of their fellow-creatures' resentment does, as a fact, often restrain men from injuring others, when they would not be restrained by a principle of virtue;" and that passionateness in strong tempers, peevishness in weak ones, exaggeration of injuries done to us, dogged refusals to be set right as to erroneous impressions connected with offences, are all "peculiarities of perverseness and wayward humour," to be traced up to anger, indeed, but yet not to be confounded with it in its original and pure state—unwholesome fermentations of the original passion, produced by the leaven which has wrought in man's heart since the fall, and which has turned what was originally a generous wine into acrid vinegar. The same leaven has wrought similar mischievous results upon the passion of

* P. 121.

emulation. Emulation is "the desire and hope of equality with, or superiority over, others, to whom we compare "ourselves," and the end which it aims at bringing about is this equality or superiority. We ought to be emulous of others in respect of their virtues and graces, so that emulation has a real place and function even in the spiritual mind. For to what principle but emulation did St. Paul appeal, when he boasted to his Macedonian converts of the promptitude and liberality of the Church of Corinth in giving alms, an appeal to which the passion of emulation in the Macedonians had responded; for "your zeal," says he to the Corinthians, describing the effect of his quoting their example, "hath provoked very many."* But when emulation seeks not simply our own equality with others, but the achievement of this equality by the particular means of bringing them down to our level, it then becomes envy, and is corrupted into an unlawful passion, not to be allowed harbour within the precincts of our nature. Of the various passions and affections, of which we are now speaking, there are some whose primary intention is the security and good of the individual (such, for example, as fear of danger, and resentment, both which act as protections to the individual); others, whose primary intention is

* 2 Cor. ix. 2.

rather the security and good of society (such, for example, as desire of esteem, compassion, indignation against successful vice, and so forth).—Above the other affections in rank, as being calmer, more free from turbid sediment, more purely reasonable, more removed from mere instincts and blind propensions, are those two tendencies of our nature, self-love and benevolence, the one lending its complexion to one class of the lower affections, the other to the other. Each of the subordinate passions rests in its own end, fear in the security which it seeks, compassion in the relief of misery, emulation in the winning of the coveted superiority, resentment in the redress (whether legal or otherwise) of an injury. But these two higher tendencies, self-love and benevolence, have for their ends, the one our own happiness and good, the other the happiness and good of others. Butler calls attention to the fact that men, in the pursuit of their passions, nearly as often contradict self-love—act, *i. e.*, in defiance of their own good and happiness—as they do benevolence; and that one who does so, who consults present and immediate gratification, in preference to what a reasonable self-love tells him is his real interest, if called selfish, should be distinguished from the man who, from undue self-love, subordinates in his own mind the interests of others to his own, and uniformly seeks the latter at the expense

of the former. The one, he suggests, should be styled sensually selfish; the other, to whom alone the term selfish is strictly appropriate, must be called, by way of distinction, deliberately selfish.—But now comes the highest of all faculties in the reasonable soul of man, the conscience, which Butler defines as "the principle of reflection in men, by which they distinguish between, approve and disapprove their own actions." This faculty, if it were only that it implies an exercise of the judgment or deliberating faculty, is evidently superior in rank to the affections and appetites, which are mere propensities to certain external objects. However weak the conscience may be in point of fact, God has stamped authority upon its brow; "to preside and govern, from the very economy and constitution of man, belongs to it. Had it strength, as it had right; had it power, as it had manifest authority, it would absolutely govern the world." Lord Shaftesbury, in his "Inquiry concerning Virtue," had implied that, putting aside our obligations to God, which the atheist does not admit, a *man who should seriously doubt or deny that virtue is conducive to happiness, would be under no obligation to follow it.* Butler maintains that such an obligation would still arise, from the indisputable authority with which conscience is invested, from the claim which it evidently makes to absolute control over all the lower faculties; so that

one who eschews virtue, and chooses vice, stands condemned by the constitution of his own nature, without bringing in a reference to any judgment passed upon his conduct by an external authority. We must not omit to observe that, at the beginning of his second Sermon, Butler distinctly recognises "some diversity among mankind with respect to" this faculty of conscience, and intimates that the same standard of right and wrong does not uniformly prevail throughout the world or throughout its different ages, thus showing that *he regards conscience not as a light, but rather as an eye.* An eye may be partly closed or fully opened; it may have a film over it; its mechanism may be deranged, and the derangement may trouble its possessor with optical illusions; but light cannot mislead, though the eye may; illusions can only be dissipated, not engendered, by light. Conscience is a judge, who deliberates upon evidence submitted to him; the evidence proves, or fails to prove, what it was brought to prove; but the judge may be under a bias.

Such is (in outline) Butler's theory of the economy of man's moral nature. And, abstruse and difficult as, by his own confession, the subject is, and ponderous and wanting in vivacity as most readers will think his treatment of it to be, yet, when we have once thoroughly mastered it, to what immense practical account may it not be turned in the con-

duct of the spiritual life, as an aid to self-examination and self-discipline! In the great work of our sanctification our own will must co-operate with God's grace, if the mental and moral disorder into which the fall has plunged us is to be set right. But how can mental and moral disorder be satisfactorily set right; how can we see to do our part in the work of setting it right, unless we understand something of the original structure which was disorganized by sin? Could a physician hope to prescribe successfully without some such knowledge of the human frame as is derived from study in the anatomy school? What chance would a watchmaker have of mending a watch, who knew nothing of the various wheels and springs which constitute the machinery, who had never seen the various parts of the interior taken to pieces and put together? Nor is it only in self-government and knowledge of our own hearts that Butler's studies of human nature might greatly assist us. They might act as preservatives against that pietism in which even the most fervid piety is apt sometimes to run to seed, and might correct mistakes in well-disposed and earnest minds, which, if uncorrected, might fret, discompose, and spiritually retard them. Many an ascetic devotee among heathen worshippers (and the morbid tendency has not unfrequently crept into and corrupted Christian devotion) has professed that the end of all moral

endeavour should be to get rid of self utterly; to suppress, by force and rigour, its earliest and most innocent movements, and, if possible, to extinguish it altogether as a motive. The attempt has never succeeded. If you try to crush self by the most painful discipline of the animal nature, he entrenches himself all the more strongly in the fortress of spiritual pride. Butler would have taught you that "reasonable self-love," no less than conscience, is a "chief or superior principle in the nature of man;" that "conscience and self-love, if we understand our true happiness, always lead us the same way;" that "duty and interest are perfectly coincident; for the most part in this world, but entirely and in every instance, if we take in the future and the whole;" and that therefore neither self-love nor our natural susceptibility to pleasure and pain are to be, or, indeed, can be, suppressed, but only controlled and guided.*

* As an instance of the looseness with which even devout and able writers express themselves on the subject of self-love, take the following, written by one of the saintliest men and most truly apostolic pastors who have graced the Church of England in recent times. It is clear that in reproving self-love he intended to reprove selfishness (its morbid perversion and excess); for the letters, from which the passage is an extract, are headed, "On Selfishness." Thus he writes to his children, under date October 21, 1841:

"Learn, in the next place, to consider self-love as that which separates us from, and Divine love as that which unites us to, God and our neighbour. In other words, learn to regard self-love as the source of all disorder,

Again; it would not be difficult to imagine a devout person taking up, from those passages of Scripture, in which anger is spoken of in the bad sense as a passion depraved by the fall, the notion that this affection should be wholly eradicated from our nature; that it is to be cut away, root and branch; and that its every working in the heart is to be regarded as a working of sin. Possessed by this idea, he prays and strives against every rising of the feeling, but with no success; he is striving, if he could see the truth, after that which is not within the designs of God's sanctifying grace for man; striving to eliminate certain original affections from our nature, rather than to direct and control them. It is a weary and disheartening thing to strive for the unattainable; and if a person, under the false view I have described, were to take up Butler's "Sermon upon Resentment," and to be taught by him that, apart from its perversions and excesses, this passion has excellent and necessary ends to answer; that its proper objects are injury, injustice, and cruelty, by fastening upon which it

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strife, and confusion; and Divine love, as, at once, the parent and the nurse of all good order, harmony and peace, whether in families, or neighbourhoods, or states; leading us to see God in everything, and 'to do our duty in that state of life, to which it may please God to call us.'" ('Practical Religion exemplified by Letters and Passages from the Life of the late Rev. Robert Anderson, Perpetual Curate of Trinity Chapel, Brighton.' Sixth edition. Rivingtons, 1855. Page 133.)

does a public benefit, and becomes a security to society; and that the Scripture, when laying restraint upon anger, does so guardedly, bidding us to "be angry, and sin not"* (that is, not to allow anger to pass into sin, by indulging it to excess), and again denouncing punishment against every one who is angry with his brother *without a cause*,† it is very possible that such a new light as this upon the subject might seem to strike off shackles, which had before galled and hindered him in his spiritual course, and that he would thenceforth go on his way rejoicing with lightened heart and disencumbered conscience.

(3.) The last point with which we propose to occupy the attention of our readers is the description which Butler gives, or, I should rather say, which may be elicited from his Sermons, of the corruption of our nature and the effects of the fall of man. Judging from the Sermons upon Human Nature, this corruption consists mainly in the disorganization of the moral system, in the fact of conscience being dethroned, and of some unruly passion or appetite usurping its place and governing the soul. But we should wrong our bishop very much if we represented this as being his *entire* account of the disorder into which the fall has

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* Eph. iv. 26.

† See St. Matt. v. 22. Εἰκῇ = rashly, at random, on pure impulse, and without deliberation.

plunged our nature, or if we implied that the disorder itself was only incidentally noticed by him, and not made the subject of separate consideration. Again we are reminded of a passage of Scripture which Butler has most grandly illustrated, without, however, making it a formal text, or even expressly referring to it: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"* As to the exceeding deceitfulness of the natural heart of man (one of the chief features of its wickedness, and closely associated — as want of truth always will be—with another feature, want of love), was it ever more subtly analysed, more wonderfully exposed, than in Butler's two Sermons upon the character of Balaam, and upon Self-Deceit? These discourses are, indeed, great masterpieces of spiritual anatomy, showing how adroitly men, in the exercise of self-deceit, will frame a false conscience, by whose dictates they will abide with the utmost punctiliousness, while the true conscience is suppressed and held in abeyance, this being one of the tricks by which the man will pass with himself for being a strict adherent to the inner rule of right; and when to these is added the Sermon before the House of Lords on the day of the Martyrdom of King Charles I., in which he draws out the Scriptural definition of the term

* Jer. xvii. 9.

hypocrisy ("In Scripture, which treats chiefly of our behaviour towards God and our own consciences, hypocrisy signifies, not only the endeavour to delude our fellow-creatures, but likewise insincerity towards Him and towards ourselves") we must admit that, if we desire to be practically impressed with the lesson that "the heart is deceitful above all things," we can learn it nowhere so convincingly as from Butler, and that the penetration which his Sermons display into the secrets of the human conscience, entitles him to a foremost place among our English preachers.

It should be added that the Sermon upon Self-Deceit not only urges the necessity of self-examination as a preservative from it, but also gives advice for this exercise, which will be found of great service in the conduct of it. How helpful for detecting the blindness induced by self-partiality would those rules of Butler's be, that we should consider what parts of our own character and conduct would offer most handle to an enemy bent upon disparaging and defaming us, and watch ourselves specially in that quarter, and that, in judging ourselves for any part of our behaviour, we should imagine that our neighbour had behaved in exactly the same way, and consider what judgment *we* should give upon *him*.

And is this all the account then that can be given of the corruption of our nature, that it stands in the

rebellion of the passions against the authority of conscience, which is their lawful sovereign, and in the self-partiality and self-flattery which are perversions of self-love,—which *are* self-love in its excessive and morbid actings? All the account which unassisted reason can give, not all the account which may be gathered by the help of Revelation. Holy Scripture teaches that the great principle of our recovery from the ruins of the fall is faith—"the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Now there must be a correspondence, one would think, between the fall and the recovery, as between a disease and the remedy which cures it. The remedy cures in virtue of some natural adaptation which it has to the complaint. The inference therefore is forced upon us that the great spiritual result of the fall was to bring man under the empire of things which are seen, to make him a slave to the visible, to loosen his grasp upon all such truths as he cannot reach either by the senses or by experience, upon the being and presence of God and upon his own immortality. He has noble aspirations still; but time and sense lie like a collar round his shoulder, and pin him down to the earth. His faith was disabled on the moment of his fall. Though still able to foresee, and ready to provide against, a future,—yet it must be a future in time, of which the race to which he belongs has had experience. In his left hand he retains the sense of touch; but

the right hand,* wherewith he might grasp and feel the solidity of the things which are not seen and are eternal, is withered. This is the reason of the phenomenon to which Butler frequently calls attention, that men for the present gratification of some passion, so often act in direct violation of what they know to be for their own interest. The reason is the grasp which their senses, and all that is called in Scripture "the world," has upon them in virtue of their fall,—the urgency with them of the present and the visible. Connected with this urgency, there is one point which we venture to think that Butler might have drawn out more explicitly, without in the least departing from his line of excluding Revelation from his view, in order to find evidences strongly corroborative of its testimony in the structure of the human mind. It has been reserved for a divine of this century, the late Archdeacon Hare, to bring out this point forcibly and fully in his Sermons on the Victory of Faith. The point is the extraordinary combination in man of present gratification of passion, though known to be adverse to his best interests, with deliberate provision for a foreseen future in time, which future the individual may not live to see. The same man, who shows himself utterly unable to resist a temptation to some excess of intemperance, which he knows will tend to undermine his bodily

* See St. Luke vi. 6.

health, will sow in anticipation of a harvest, which he may never reap, will labour hard, year after year, for a competence which he may never enjoy, will even submit to toil and self-denial for the attainment of some distinction which he may never win. Butler would say that this is a case of passion in certain points prevailing over reasonable self-love, while in other points self-love prevails over the lower instincts, such as love of ease, natural indolence, and averseness to trouble. But there is something else in the matter besides and beyond a mere compliance or non-compliance with self-love. Hare shows most conclusively that every success which man has reached in his natural life, every realised result of civilization, has been reached in the strength of faith. Man has projected himself into the unseen future, not by a blind or unintelligent instinct, like the ant or the bee, but by deliberate and thoughtful foresight. And this projection of himself into the future is faith; it is the operation of a faculty on things which come *within* human experience, and which, as applied to things *transcending human experience*, is the renovating faculty of our nature. Had Butler seized this point, he might have made in his massive solid style, a grand disquisition upon it, which would have enriched our English literature with one more great Sermon. Tersely and with sententious gravity he would have prosecuted the great argument, which Hare has dilated on so copiously, so expansively, and

with such warmth and glow of devout emotion. The New Testament suspends the salvation of man on the genuineness of his faith. Now, putting aside Revelation altogether, we find in our study of man a principle of faith (if by faith be meant realization of the unseen), which works, and works powerfully, in his natural life. More than this; we find that this faculty of realizing the unseen has been the principle by which man has won every success which he has achieved, and by which every deed in human history, which is good and great, has been done. It is, in short, the one faculty, which raises man above the beasts that perish, the faculty by which, in its higher actings, he does or may take cognizance of a God above him and an eternity before him. Butler, faithful to his principle of borrowing nothing, not even his terms, from Revelation, calls this faculty reason. And reason it is in the language of the moral philosopher, and under one aspect of it, which yet in the language of the Scriptures, and under another aspect of it, is faith. Considered as a light kindled by the Author of our nature in man's heart, it is reason; considered as a principle, which lifts us above our immediate surroundings into a state of things concealed from us at present, it is faith. But to view it as faith has this advantage, that we thus gain a strong evidence in favour of Revelation, when we come to perceive that the faculty which it selects as our moral and spiritual restorative, is the

very faculty to which all past improvements and successes in man's natural life have been due.

But let us be thankful to Butler for the large amount of independent evidence to Revelation which his Sermons furnish, without venturing to complain that he has not done in this line quite all that he might have done. His manner is to be reticent; to withhold much that he might advance; to drop few words, but weighty, into the ears of the wise. We feel instinctively in reading his writings, that there is a great power in reserve which he does not care to display. Suffice it that in the independent study of our nature he has arrived at evident and unquestionable traces of some great moral convulsion, which somehow (it is not his business to say how), it underwent. It is all disorganized,—a body politic in a state of mutiny. Affections, perfectly wholesome in themselves, have become morbid by some perversion or degradation, which in reason there is no accounting for. Self-partiality, the excess (or rather caricature) of self-love, has brought in its train all sorts of blindness and delusion, so that we are unable to see ourselves as others see us. The third chapter of Genesis gives the key to this otherwise unaccountable moral phenomenon. Man is a fallen creature, by virtue of an act which his ancestors did, in unhallowed ambition, and in gratification of their senses. Ever since their descendants have groaned under the bondage of the visible world, that lower

system of things "in which the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," are the dominant principles. Deliverance is to be had only by faith in that Redeemer, whose miraculous birth, and passion, and triumph, were dimly and enigmatically predicted in the course of the sentence upon the arch-offender. But we cannot appreciate the remedy without both study and personal experience of the disease. And for the analysis of the disease, the careful moral anatomy which brings it to light, and shows us how poorly we realize the ideal of human nature, as it existed in the mind and design of the Creator, there is no work in English Theology like Bishop Butler's Sermons,—none which shows so clearly how accordant are the teachings of Revelation with the indications of our own nature, as regards the end for which we were made, the height from which we have fallen, and the path which it behoves us to pursue.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF BISHOP BUTLER.

JOSEPH BUTLER was born at Wantage in Berkshire, the birthplace of Alfred the Great, May 18, 1692. His father was a retired linen and woollen draper, who, wishing to educate his son for the ministry of the sect to which he himself belonged, that of the Presbyterians, placed him at a very excellent academy at Gloucester (afterwards removed to Tewkesbury), which turned out several men of mark besides himself; among them Archbishop Secker, a constant friend to Butler during his life, and the vindicator of his memory after his death. It was here that, at the age of twenty-one, he first showed his marvellous metaphysical power in a correspondence with Dr. Samuel Clarke on certain difficulties which had occurred to him in Clarke's famous work, 'A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God.' The correspondence was conducted with a modesty which reflected as much credit upon Butler's heart as the argument did upon his head, his name being carefully concealed, and Secker conveying the letters to the Gloucester Post Office for him, lest his *incognito* should be discovered. Was it the constitutionally orthodox mind both of Butler and Secker, or the law, whose operation is not unfrequently seen, that the children of parents with strong religious views repudiate those views for themselves, or a certain narrowness which all sects exhibit, and which is re-

pulsive to great and cultivated minds, which made these two young men renounce the communion in which they had been educated, and, after mature consideration, declare for the Church of England? Butler's father, finding that no arguments of the Presbyterian divines were strong enough to shake his son's resolution to desert the ranks of the Nonconformists, sent him, at the age of two-and-twenty, to Oriel College, Oxford; a nursing mother then, as in later days, of intellectual celebrities. Here he formed the acquaintance of Mr. Edward Talbot, son of the then Bishop of Durham, and through their interest and kindness reached his first steps of preferment, the Preachership of the Rolls (1718), and the living of Haughton near Darlington (1722), which he was allowed shortly after to exchange for the richer benefice of Stanhope. His year was divided now between his duties as a parish priest at Stanhope, and those attaching to his preachership at the Rolls. It was his powerful execution of these last duties which has given us the famous 'Fifteen Sermons,' upon which, as well as upon the occasional Discourses annexed to them, must be formed our estimate of his character as a preacher. At Stanhope, Henry Philpotts, late Bishop of Exeter, on succeeding to the living, made every inquiry in his power respecting "Rector Butler," his principal informant being an old parishioner of ninety-three, who remembered having frequently seen Butler some eighty years ago. Beyond a tradition of the rector's "riding a black pony, and riding always very fast" (the latter, perhaps, not utterly insignificant as a trait of character; for does not "he driveth furiously" enter as an element into the delineation of a character in Holy Scripture?), and the more moral trait of his having a peculiar

sensibility to the distresses of beggars, which led him, not indeed always to relieve them (one of his Sermons shows that he held that practice to be injudicious and unjustifiable), but to run away from their importunities, and seclude himself in his house,—scarcely any memories survived of the great philosopher and divine. His friends thought that his talent was at Stanhope bound up in a napkin and hidden in the earth; and when Secker, in his capacity as royal chaplain, preached before Queen Caroline in 1732, he took the opportunity of a conversation, with which Her Majesty honoured him after the sermon, to mention his friend. The Queen had thought that Butler was dead; but, on making inquiry afterwards on this point, received from Archbishop Blackburn the humorous reply; "No, madam, not *dead*, but *buried*." With the aid of such friends as Secker and Talbot, Butler was speedily exhumed. The Queen, a great patroness of literary men, at whose request Newton drew up his treatise on "Ancient Chronology," and to whose influence Berkeley and Secker, as well as Butler, owed their advancement, appointed him Clerk of her Closet in 1736, and in the same year procured for him a stall at Rochester. Every evening, we are told, from seven till nine, she commanded his attendance upon her, in order to enjoy his conversation on philosophical and theological subjects—Berkeley, Clarke, Hoadly, and Sherlock, frequently taking part in the discussions. It was in 1736 that the great work which has immortalised the name of Butler, 'The Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion,' appeared. The Queen is said to have greatly admired it; but she can hardly have studied it deeply, for it is not a book which can be mastered in a short time, and Queen Caroline's days were numbered. At the close of

1737 she died, some weeks after receiving privately at Butler's hands the Sacrament of the Holy Communion. George II., however, showed himself mindful of the interest which his consort had shown in Butler; and Lord Chancellor Talbot, the brother of his early friend, also warmly recommending him, he was consecrated to the see of Bristol, December 3, 1738, by Archbishop Potter, who in the previous year had been translated from Oxford to Canterbury. His friend Secker had occupied the see of Bristol before him, from 1735 to 1737, and had been succeeded by Dr. Gooch, who held it only for a single year. Butler's tenure of this very poorly endowed see was to last twelve years. The King's eye, however, was still upon him; and, by way of compensating him for the great poverty of his see, he was installed Dean of St. Paul's in the spring of 1740, a dignity the revenues of which enabled him, as he used to say, to make extensive improvements and additions to his palace at Bristol. On receiving this preferment, he resigned Stanhope and his stall at Rochester, and divided his year equally between the duties of his deanery and those of his diocese. As to the former of these duties, we are told that he never, while in residence, failed to attend both the daily services in the Cathedral. Building seems to have been somewhat of a passion with him; and an architectural decoration which he made in repairing and enlarging his palace at Bristol, aroused a senseless outcry, and was thought injudicious even by his friend Secker, warmly as he challenged the absurd inference drawn from it. Over the holy Table in the palace chapel he placed a white marble cross, about three feet high, which was thrown up in relief by a slab of black marble, into which it was sunk, and was surrounded by a frame of

beautifully carved cedar-wood, the gift of the Bristol merchants. Some fifteen years after his death (in the year 1767), an anonymous pamphleteer put forth the calumny that he "died in the communion of a church that makes use of saints, saints' days, and all the trumpery of saint worship," alleging, as one of the grounds of this accusation, that he had "put up the popish insignia of the cross in his chapel" at Bristol. His attached friend Secker (who had become Archbishop of Canterbury in 1758) vindicated him from these aspersions by letters, signed "Misopseudes," which appeared in the 'St. James's Chronicle.' Secker died in the August of the following year (1768); so that his vindication of Butler may be said to have been one of the latest acts of his life. As an act of constant friendship, therefore, it raises our estimation of the Archbishop; while at the same time a charge so obviously false and spiteful, brought against a prelate so eminent and of such established character as Butler, might probably have been better left to expire by its own inanity. Men might be apt to think there is something in a charge, when the Primate of all England condescends to enter the lists against it. But, be this as it may, it may soothe the wounded sensibilities of the Protestant mind to reflect that this sad proof of Butler's deflection from the pure faith of the Reformed Church no longer exists. Bristol, which has nobly maintained to the present day its character for iconoclasm, could not tolerate such an abomination; and the white cross on the black ground perished in the ruins of the episcopal palace, when the mob in 1831 set fire to it.

Even in a memoir so cursory as the present, it is quite impossible to pass over the reminiscence of Butler

which has been preserved to us by Dean Tucker of Gloucester. When Tucker was a minor Canon of Bristol Cathedral, and curate of St. Stephen's Church in that city, his abilities and energy attracted Bishop Butler's notice, so that he made him his domestic chaplain, and used his interest to obtain for him further preferment. The story must be told in the Dean's own words; we are inclined to think it the most characteristic of all the anecdotes of the Bishop which have come down to us:—

"The late Dr. Butler, Bishop of Bristol, had a singular notion respecting large communities and public bodies; a notion which is not, perhaps, altogether inapplicable to the present case. His custom was, when at Bristol, to walk for hours in his garden in the darkest night which the time of the year could afford, and I had frequently the honour to attend him. After walking some time, he would stop suddenly and ask the question, 'What security is there against the insanity of individuals? The physicians know of none; and as to divines, we have no data, either from Scripture, or from reason, to go upon relative to this affair.' 'True, my lord, no man has a lease of his understanding, any more than of his life; they are both in the hands of the Sovereign Disposer of all things.' He would then take another turn, and again stop short: 'Why might not whole communities and public bodies be seized with fits of insanity, as well as individuals?' 'My lord, I have never considered the case, and can give no opinion concerning it.' 'Nothing but this principle, that they are liable to insanity, equally, at least, with private persons, can account for the major part of those transactions of which we read in history.' I thought little," adds the Dean, "of that odd conceit

of the Bishop at that juncture; but I own I could not avoid thinking of it a great deal since, and applying it to many cases."

But we must hasten on to the few remaining events of Butler's life. The King's favour, probably in consequence of the late Queen's partiality for him, still accompanied him. In 1746, when he had been eight years at Bristol, he was appointed Clerk of the Closet. And he might have stood, had it so pleased him, on the highest pinnacle to which in this country ecclesiastical ambition can aspire. For on the death of Archbishop Potter, in 1747, the Primacy of all England was offered to, and declined by him, with the observation that, "it was too late for him to try to support a falling Church;" words which, while they attest his modesty, and the true greatness of a soul weaned from earthly ambitions, at the same time have a dash of constitutional melancholy in them. The Church of England in his day may have seemed to be, and may really have been on the surface, torpid and unenergetic; and still more depressing times were in store for her after his death; but "as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves," there was in her during all that dreary age a "holy seed," which was "the substance thereof;" and the energy and activity, which of late years has manifested itself in our communion, are but the result of principles which even then were working in the hearts of English Churchmen, deep in the soil, but not yet apparent above the surface. Three years after the offer of the Primacy had been made to Butler (in 1750) the see of Durham fell vacant, and was offered to Butler, with a private intimation that the lord-lieutenancy would be no longer attached to it, but conferred upon a

secular peer. He declined it, in the first instance, on the ground that "it was a matter of indifference to him whether he died Bishop of Bristol, or of Durham; but *not* a matter of indifference to him whether the honours of the see were invaded during his incumbency." It must be well if in these days, when it is the fashion to strip bare every eminent position not only of its emoluments, but of every scrap of ancient prestige which has clung to it from the earliest period, a similar spirited reply were made by all those to whom the denuded position is offered. In Butler's case the resistance which he thought it right to make to the minister's proposal was not allowed to outweigh his claims to the high position. The see was again offered to him, and the removal of its ancient honours not further insisted upon. He did homage for the see on the 9th of November, 1750, and was enthroned at Durham the same day by proxy. Horace Walpole's sneer at this translation, vented in the course of the next year (1751), when the bishops had offended him by offering no opposition to the Regency Bill, was as follows: "The Bishop of Durham has been wafted to that see in a cloud of metaphysics, and remains absorbed in it." The income of the bishopric of Durham was large; and Butler spent it, as a bishop should, in acts of large munificence and hospitality. On one occasion, when applied to for aid towards a newly-projected benevolent institution, he called for his steward, and asked how much money he had in his possession. On being told five hundred pounds, he exclaimed, "Five hundred pounds! What a shame for a bishop to have so much! Give it away; give it all to this gentleman for his new institution." Three days in every week the Bishop entertained publicly, with all suitable circumstance, the gentry of

the county and neighbourhood; while in private his habits were simple and frugal even to plainness, and on the other days, even when he was not quite alone, the provision made for the table consisted of only two dishes. But the way of life thus indicated was not to continue long. Our prelate, having given a glimpse to the world of the way in which it behoved a Prince-Bishop to live, was soon to be withdrawn from it. In 1752 his constitution seemed to break up. Clifton was resorted to, and then the waters of Bath, but with no good effect. On Tuesday, the 16th of June, 1752, the great Christian philosopher entered into the state where all those mysteries which hang over religion, both natural and revealed, and which not the subtlest or profoundest understanding can enable man to resolve, are made plain in the light of God's countenance. One or two edifying anecdotes are told of his latest sentiments, for which probably (even if they have been added to and touched up) there is some foundation in truth. "In his dying moments the Bishop expressed it as an awful thing to appear before the moral Governor of the world" (a sentiment so coincident with the whole strain of Butler's theology, that we can entirely understand its recurring to him with peculiar force in the solemn hour when flesh and heart were failing). "On this his chaplain" (Dr. Foster) "expounded the efficacy of the blood which cleanseth from all sin, and in terms so adjusted to the felt and expressed apprehensions of the dying prelate, that his last utterance was, 'O, this is comfortable!' with which words on his lips he expired." Butler must have been perfectly familiar with the text 1 John i. 7; may have often studied it and preached upon it; but now at length had come to him the moment of spiritual susceptibility, when the testi-

mony of "the cleansing blood" winged its way through his soul with all the power of a spiritual cordial. And as to the preliminary sense of awe, in the prospect of appearing before God, this was a condition of the comfort reaching him, and doubtless in such a character as his was unusually deep. The wise man after the flesh, if truly instructed in the knowledge of God and of himself, has no other hope than that which supports the rudest peasant's soul; nay, in proportion to the amount of that knowledge is the depth of his humiliation; and "he fears as he enters into the cloud," even though it be the bright cloud of God's presence and smile. And so Bishop Butler entered into rest in the comfortable faith of Christ's atonement:—

> "Just as I am, without one plea,
> Save that Thy blood was shed for me,
> And that Thou bidd'st me trust in Thee,
> O Lamb of God, I come."

A piece of information given us by the poet Coleridge in his 'Table-talk' summarizes in three or four lines the moral character of the man. Butler's was a strong soul, liable to strong and stormy temptations; the howling winds swept across it; the waves of passion surged over it and rose mountain-high; but the reason of the Christian Philosopher (which, as I have endeavoured to show at the end of my Lecture on his character as a preacher, is only faith in another aspect of it) held the helm, and kept the vessel true to her course. "The great Bishop Butler," says Coleridge, "was all his life struggling against the devilish suggestions of his senses, which would have maddened him if he had relaxed the stern watchfulness of his reason for a single moment."

He was buried in his first Cathedral at Bristol, near he episcopal throne, on June 20, 1752, with as little state as might be, Mr. Chapman, the Sub-dean of Bristol, reading the Office for the Burial of the Dead.

The facts and anecdotes in the above 'Biographical Notice' are almost all drawn from the Rev. Thomas Bartlett's 'Memoirs of Joseph Butler, late Lord Bishop of Durham' [London: John W. Parker, 1839]. The world is much indebted to Mr. Bartlett for having collected with great industry, and recorded with accuracy and fidelity, every reminiscence which survived of his illustrious kinsman by marriage; one who has been justly described as "not only pre-eminent in his own day, but in the foremost rank of the immortalized sages of the world."

Chronology of Bishop Butler's Life.

Joseph Butler, born	May 18, 1692
Commences correspondence with Dr. Clarke	Nov. 4, 1713
Entered as a Commoner at Oriel	Mar. 17, 1714
Appointed Preacher at the Rolls	1718
Took the degree of B.C.L.	1721
Presented by Bishop Talbot to the living of Haughton ..	1722
Exchanges Haughton for Stanhope	1725
Publishes his 'Fifteen Sermons'	1726
Resigns Preachership at the Rolls	Autumn, 1726
Geo. II. and Queen Caroline of Brandenburg-Anspach come to the Throne	June 11, 1727
D.C.L., and Chaplain to Lord Chancellor Talbot	1733
Clerk of the Closet to the Queen	1736
Prebendary of Rochester	Aug. 7, 1736

'The Analogy' published	May, 1736
Queen Caroline died	Nov. 20, 1737
Butler consecrated Bishop of Bristol	Dec. 3, 1738
Installed Dean of St. Paul's	May 24, 1740
Refused the Archbishropic of Canterbury	1747
Translated from Bristol to Durham	Nov. 9, 1750
The Regency Bill	1751
Dies at Bath, aged 60	Tues. June 16, 1752
Buried in Bristol Cathedral	Sat. June 20, 1752

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